

Kabila says accord on Congo conflict signed

KINSHASA (R) — President Laurent Kabila said on Monday he had signed an accord in Libya with Ugandan leader Yoweri Museveni and other African presidents on ending the Congolese conflict. Kabila told state television that Libya and Eritrea had agreed to send observer troops to replace Ugandan forces he accuses of invading parts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, formerly Zaire. But he said further summits were planned to bring other heads of state into a definitive peace deal.

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Jordan focusing on finding new water sources, improving quality — King

French firm awarded \$8.8m contract to manage Amman water network

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Abdullah on Monday said Jordan is giving special attention to water issues and is concerned with searching for new sources of water, improving the quality of available supplies and managing current resources.

Speaking at a meeting with Jerome Monod, chairman of the board of directors of the French company Suez Lyonnaise des Eaux Group, which is undertaking the task of managing water supplies in Amman, King Abdullah expressed hope that Jordan will overcome the problem of water shortages through cooperation with other nations and international organizations.

Monod briefed the King on an agreement signed Monday in Amman on the management of all water-related services within the Amman region which is designed to reduce the amount of leakage and replace the old water network.

Earlier, Monod met with Prime Minister Abdur-Ra'uf S. Rawabdeh to discuss the water management agreement.

According to Water Minister Kamel Mahadin, who attended the meeting, Rawabdeh reaffirmed the importance of the project for Jordan and urged the French company to begin

implementing it as soon as possible.

Mahadin and representatives of the French firm and its Jordanian partner, Arabtech Jaraneh, signed the agreement on managing Amman's water and wastewater networks, a project which will cost \$8.8 million and will be carried out in four years, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

The agreement provides for the French company to take charge of water-related services within the Greater Amman region, ensure high-quality domestic water supplies and manage water distribution by trucks, in addition to other related distribution services within the area of the company's concession as provided for under the agreement.

Ministry of Water and Irrigation sources have said illegal water use costs the treasury JD15 million in losses every year, and the ministry estimates that more than 50 per cent of domestic water supplies are lost due to worn-out water networks and theft.

The French firm's work is aimed at improving the management of water resources and water distribution programmes, according to ministry sources, which noted that Jordan is seeking assistance from



His Majesty King Abdullah meets with Jerome Monod, chairman of the board of directors of the French company Suez Lyonnaise des Eaux Group (Petra photo)

international financial institutions and several countries for the ambitious project of rehabilitating the Amman water network at an estimated cost of JD150 million over four years.

Under the agreement, the French firm undertakes the task of pumping water to the network, supervising water purifi-

cation at the Zai station and managing wastewater treatment plants, including conducting any rehabilitation and maintenance work required.

In addition, the French group undertakes the task of reading water metres, collecting bills, transferring modern technology in water-related matters and

rehabilitating the water network in accordance with a set and approved timetable.

Jordan's population is expected to increase from 5.3 million in 2000 to more than eight million by the year 2020, a factor which will severely strain the country's water resources.

Prime minister criticises official media for 'poor performance'

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdur-Ra'uf S. Rawabdeh on Monday criticised the official media in Jordan for poor performance, saying that effective and highly competent professionals are needed to deal with new challenges in the media world.

The new era under His Majesty King Abdullah requires that the official information and media services open up to society's needs and meet the new requirements, Rawabdeh said during a meeting with the directors of the Jordan Radio and Television Corporation and the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

"We need a truly national information service covering government and opposition views alike and we want to have a new type of modern information service opening up to and interacting with all sectors of the Jordanian public," Rawabdeh said.

"The performance of the official Jordanian media has been retreating and does not satisfy anyone," the prime minister added.

He said Jordan requires an efficient and objective media that can present Jordan's political positions in a logical and acceptable

manner to people everywhere.

"Let me tell you in complete frankness that you represent a typical 'terrified department' lacking daring and creative professionals," Rawabdeh stressed, promising to protect personnel who take initiatives, even if they fail.

Describing the performance of Jordan Television's third channel as lacklustre, Rawabdeh asked, "Why should funds be spent on this channel as long as its programmes are not seen or watched by anyone?"

Demanding that Jordan Radio and Television buy Jordanian artists' productions, the prime minister said the official media services should employ highly competent and experienced personnel.

Rawabdeh said attention should be given to Jordanian artists and theatre, saying that heads of information services are responsible for that.

He also called on the country's information services to re-introduce political sections that are capable of reviewing the state's position and reflecting Jordan's views on domestic and foreign issues. Rawabdeh commended

the radio station's call-in programme and said it has contributed to solving a number of problems. He added that radio broadcasters should be encouraged to perform better and not be transferred to administrative jobs.

During the meeting, the director of Petra and the secretary general of the Ministry of Information, the directors of the radio and television stations, and other media officials outlined their departments' plans for development.

In remarks to the press after the meeting, Rawabdeh said that under the new era of King Abdullah, Jordan hopes to open up to all Arab states and encourage closer cooperation in all fields. He said the government will support media services and help them promote and upgrade their performance.

The premier said King Abdullah's tour of Arab capitals is aimed at further consolidating Jordan's relations with Arab countries and building on the foundations laid by the late King Hussein. Rawabdeh stated that Jordan's policies can change in response to developments but the country's principled stand will remain unchanged.

NATO admits 'possible' civilian deaths from bombing of refugee convoy

Yeltsin says Russia cannot allow West to control Yugoslavia

Agencies

NATO GEARED up Monday for closer combat with the Serbs, preparing to send "tank-busting" Apache helicopters into action in Yugoslavia next week, officials said.

The news came as the alliance made new admissions about the bloodiest blunder of its air campaign to bring peace to the province of Kosovo, the bombing of refugee convoys that Serb sources said cost at least 75 lives.

The diplomatic front also heated up with U.S. President Bill Clinton and Russia's Boris Yeltsin debating the crisis by phone in their first talks since the NATO action began on March 24. There was little sign they narrowed their differences.

With nearly four weeks of bombings making little apparent dent in the Serb drive to chase ethnic Albanians out of Kosovo, the AH-64 Apache helicopters would add a new dimension to the alliance's efforts.

The aircraft, one of the stars of the U.S. arsenal in the 1991 Gulf War, can attack day or

night and specialises in destroying tanks. Two dozen were being shipped to Yugoslavia but U.S. military officials have spoken of doubling the fleet.

Their arrival in Albania from Italy was delayed by weather and the need to build landing facilities, but Pentagon officials said Monday two dozen U.S. AH-64 Apache helicopters were expected to fly to Albania Tuesday.

NATO Secretary General Javier Solana told French Radio they would be "in action next week."

At the airport outside the Albanian capital of Tirana, about a dozen U.S. M-39 armoured vehicles equipped with multiple rocket launchers rolled off U.S. military cargo planes at the airport. The vehicles will be used in reconnaissance missions to help guide the helicopter attacks, NATO military sources said.

While the use of the Apaches represents a greater risk for NATO than straight bombing, Solana denied the alliance was preparing to send a ground force into Kosovo. "There is no change in strategy at this

time," he said.

In Brussels, NATO admitted for the first time its aircraft had hit two convoys including civilian vehicles in southwest Kosovo last week, but defended the pilots responsible for the incident that has kept it on the defensive.

The admission was made at a news conference held by U.S. General Daniel Leaf, who was asked to investigate the bombings. NATO officials first declined to confirm reports of civilian casualties and then admitted to hitting one civilian vehicle.

General Leaf said the first convoy was north of Djakovica, where several homes had just been torched, leading a NATO pilot to conclude that three military-type vehicles leaving the scene were responsible for the fires.

"He concluded that the occupants of these vehicles were perpetrating a house burning," said Leaf. "From the altitude he was operating at, it appeared a military-style vehicle."

The second convoy involved some 20 vehicles travelling between Djakovica

and Prizren at a speed and with spacing consistent with military movements, Leaf said.

The pilots were convinced it was a convoy of Serb forces, but it was "possible," Leaf said, that civilian vehicles were hit. The pilots pulled back when they saw what might have been civilian vehicles in the convoy.

In London, British General Michael Rose said the bombing of the refugee convoy showed that NATO rules of engagement were not sufficiently rigorous.

"What we [NATO] hadn't had explained is why the rules of engagement are so loose that the pilots are authorised to attack targets that they haven't positively identified as being Serb armour," the former NATO peacekeeping commander in Bosnia said on British television.

NATO kept up its air raids Monday, targeting a small airport near the southern Kosovo town of Urosevac and damaging the runway, hangars, a guard house and an office building, witnesses said.

(Continued on page 2)



A woman gestures as an Israeli police bulldozer demolishes a house in Arab east Jerusalem on Monday (AFP photo)

Israel destroys two Arab homes in Jerusalem

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Israeli police destroyed two Palestinian homes in Arab east Jerusalem on Monday, saying the houses were built illegally.

Large numbers of Israeli police guarded the army wrecking equipment as it demolished the two large fam-

ily homes in the village of Issawiya at the northern edge of Arab east Jerusalem.

The houses belonged to the families of Mohammad Jaradat and Bassam Farwa and were home to more than 20 people, residents said.

Residents watched the demolitions but did not try to

intervene, the witnesses said.

"Last time we protested, one man, the father of a recently born child, was killed," Abdullah, who did not want to give his second name, told AFP.

"The house was destroyed anyway and a man lost his life. What's the point of protest-

ing?" he said.

Israel frequently demolishes homes that have been built without permits by Palestinians in east Jerusalem and areas of the West Bank that are under its control. Security forces have torn down at least 42 Palestinian dwellings since the beginning of 1999.

Enforcement of copyright laws presents obstacle to Jordan's WTO accession

By Ghadeer Taher

AMMAN — Several businesses selling software around the country were given a blunt ultimatum last month: stop pirating software or face the consequences.

The warning letters were sent by the Business Software Alliance, an organisation representing international computer giants, including IBM, Microsoft, Intel and Oracle.

The warning letters should not be taken lightly, says the BSA, and neither should Jordan's new copyright law, say officials.

Jordan last year amended

its 1992 copyright law to conform with World Trade Organisation TRIPS (Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) requirements.

The new copyright law and other intellectual property

NEWS ANALYSIS

legislation, including patent and trademark laws, are part of requirements for accession to the WTO, that club of 134 countries accounting for 90 per cent of global trade and services, which Jordan seeks to join.

"Jordan has a good copyright law," said Bassam Tal-

houmi, a lawyer and the president of the newly-created Jordanian Society for the Protection of Intellectual Property Rights, a group of lawyers and businesspersons lobbying for enforcement of a new copyright law. "The real battle is enforcement... Will the government enforce the law or not?"

The Kingdom still has significant legal and policy reforms to implement before making the grade for membership in the WTO, which aims to reduce tariff and non-tariff barriers to international trade in goods, facilitate trade in services and protect intellectual property rights.

The law prohibits reproduction of software without permission from the owner of the copyrighted computer programme and it carries penalties including a fine of up to JD3,000, seizure of products used for illegal copying and/or prison terms ranging from three months to three years.

At one popular software business, and a recipient of the BSA letter, rock-bottom prices are the norm. Instead of the JD1,200 for an original Microsoft NT Server version sold by a licensed dealer, a pirated copy is sold for a mere JD8, and there are many more "steals" to choose from, including

movies and music CDs.

But although this "bargain" utopia is now illegal, that fact has not stopped this store or others like it in the Kingdom from enjoying a thriving business.

What the new law lacks is an implementation mechanism, which, as stipulated, would fall under the umbrella of the National Library.

"The National Library lacks trained, qualified personnel to carry out such a mission," said a senior official. "Implementation needs coordination and cooperation between the Customs Department, the police department, and the ministries of industry and trade

and information... we have a long way to go."

Article 36 of the law, which establishes this enforcement arm, is the focal point of this coordination.

An office to enforce the law, not yet set up, will have the power to carry out inspections, raids, confiscate pirated goods and remand violators to court.

Already, the United States Trade Representative Office has put Jordan on a Special 301 watch list for having inadequate intellectual property protection. This is one level below the priority watch list reserved for those countries with the most egregious violations. The IPR

issue is expected to make the agenda in talks between His Majesty King Abdullah and U.S. President Bill Clinton

scheduled for next month in Washington.

(Continued on page 2)

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Israel approves extradition law

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel's parliament adopted legislation on Monday permitting the extradition of Israeli citizens for prosecution abroad.

The amendment to a 1978 law barring the extradition of any Israeli national was pushed through a special session of the Knesset following a controversial supreme court ruling in February barring the return to the United States of a Jewish American youth wanted for murder.

The ruling angered U.S. officials and prompted lawmakers to push through the amended extradition law which had been languishing in a parliamentary commission for months.

The amendment was approved by the Knesset law committee and then the final two readings by the full parliament on Monday.

Under existing legislation, Israeli citizens could not be extradited for trial abroad, even if they obtained their citizenship through birth without ever entering the Jewish state prior to their crime.

Under the amended law, if an Israeli citizen who is not a resident in Israel is charged with a crime in a foreign country with which Israel has an extradition treaty, he can be extradited for trial and eventual imprisonment abroad.

If the suspect is an Israeli resident, he or she can be extradited for trial and sentencing only on condition the foreign authorities permit them to serve their prison terms in Israel.

Hanan Porat, head of the law, justice and constitution committee, told lawmakers ahead of

Monday's plenary votes that the existing extradition law created "a situation in which Israel could turn into a safe haven for criminals."

"The law contradicts international extradition treaties and makes it difficult for Israel to seek the extradition of persons who committed crimes against Israelis," he added.

The old law was widely criticized as encouraging dual citizens to seek refuge in Israel after committing crimes abroad.

In the recent case involving the United States, Israel refused to extradite Samuel Sheinbein, 18, a dual U.S.-Israeli citizen wanted for the murder of an associate, Alfredo Tello, in September 1997.

Sheinbein fled to Israel two days after Tello's dismembered and charred body was found in

the Washington, D.C. suburb where Sheinbein lived.

Sheinbein had Israeli nationality from his Israel-born father but had never before visited the country.

The Sheinbein case strained Israeli-U.S. ties with Secretary of State Madeleine Albright personally calling for his extradition and some U.S. Congress members threatening to hold U.S. aid to Israel if the youth was not turned over.

Ministry of justice officials said on Monday that they were pleased with the new law.

"The law as it stands after the amendments is much more logical, it makes perfect sense and personally I am very pleased with it," Marvin Hankin, a lawyer in the extradition department of the ministry of justice told AFP.



DISAPPOINTED BY ELECTIONS RESULTS: A woman covers her eyes with her hands in a show of disappointment Monday at the loss of the Islamist Virtue Party in the Turkish general elections. Turkish Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit looked set today to become the next head of government after his party's triumph in legislative elections, boosted by the capture of Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan in February (AFP photo)

Baghdad calls on Lebanese to turn Amoun into battle field

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq on Monday called on Lebanon to transform the village of Amoun, occupied by Israel since Thursday, into a battle field to weaken the "Zionist enemy."

"The Lebanese must not be discouraged because they have already succeeded in liberating Amoun but the Zionist enemy regained it once again by military means," an official spokesman said, quoted by Baghdad's new papers.

The spokesman, speaking after a cabinet meeting Sunday presided over by President Saddam Hussein, called on Lebanon to "transform the question of Amoun into a burden for the Zionists and a battle field to weaken them."

"The occupation of Amoun does not mean the Lebanese people were defeated because they can repeat their past actions," the spokesman said.

The ruling Baath Party's Al Thawra newspaper said "the Zionists have occupied Amoun again to show that it is they, and not the Lebanese, who have the last word in southern Lebanon."

Enforcement of copyright laws presents obstacle

(Continued from page 1)

"In the end, we can adjust and sell originals but when we did in the past, we had to give the software away because no one could afford it," said a manager of one business, selling everything from children's programmes to the latest software design packages. "The consumer will be the biggest loser if this law is enforced, because he simply cannot afford to pay hundreds of dollars for new software."

In a country where the economy is in deep recession and per capita income is an estimated \$1,500 per year, it is hardly surprising there are so few takers for the genuine article. However, industry experts say that companies which have invested in their systems opt for the original packages despite the staggering difference in price because they

need the technical support offered by licensed dealers. Still, most customers who buy pirated software are individual users.

Jordanians, especially students and the younger generation, have kept up with the latest technology because it is affordable; this will not be the case in the future, the manager said.

Although the deadline for accession to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) during this round is close at hand, scheduled to end by early 2000, these stores do not appear too worried that they will find themselves out of business any time soon.

Besides enforcing the copyright and a few other key laws, Jordan remains some way from meeting its requirements set by the world body in terms of legislation and policy reform, say officials and experts.

The "millennium round," which is expected to begin during the year 2000, will set higher hurdles for Jordan to overcome. Entry into the WTO is essential for Jordan to attract foreign investment, secure advantages for its exports and integrate itself into the world economy.

And while officials admit that there is a great cost to joining the WTO, they say staying on the outside will be worse.

There is another argument that says Jordan cannot afford to buy computer software or computers at the prices paid by people in richer countries. To that, the software industry's reply is that Jordanian designers are going out of business because their work is not protected.

Also, copyright advocates argue that without proper legislation, foreign investors are not likely to invest in Jordan in technology-related industries.

"Necessity is the mother of all invention," said an industry expert and proponent of enforcing the law. "If we cannot buy U.S.-made operating systems, there are alternative public domains, which are free and legal," he said.

Jordan ranks well behind other countries in the region in terms of trade losses from copyright piracy. Total losses in Jordan for 1998 were an estimated \$10.2 million, according to the International Intellectual Property alliance (IIPA), which represents those industries.

Trade losses from copyright piracy in Saudi Arabia amounted to \$88 million last year, says the IIPA. However, these losses pale against those in Israel, \$141 million, and Turkey, \$225 million.

NATO admits 'possible' civilian deaths

(Continued from page 1)

Several strong explosions rocked the Kosovo capital of Pristina earlier Monday during attacks that the Yugoslav news agency Tanjug said targeted a television transmitter on Mount Mokra Gora.

NATO, which celebrates its 50th anniversary with a Washington summit on Friday, called off most of its air raids overnight because of bad weather.

Western officials said the 19-nation alliance, which has wrecked Yugoslavia's oil refineries and many of its storage depots, was also seeking to prevent Yugoslavia importing fuel.

State Department spokesman James Rubin said in Washington it was "appropriate" to cut off the flow but NATO had not agreed how.

In Brussels, NATO spokesman Jamie Shea said the alliance had called on all countries to cut off fuel supplies voluntarily.

In his conversation with Clinton, Yeltsin warned that

Yugoslav leader Slobodan Milosevic would never capitulate to NATO air strikes and said they should be halted immediately.

"They want to achieve a victory and make Yugoslavia their protectorate," Yeltsin was quoted by Interfax as saying. "We cannot allow this," he said.

Yeltsin also said Moscow would stop sending warships to the Mediterranean, a move that has alarmed NATO, and offered Russian mediation efforts.

But Clinton, who initiated the 50-minute call, insisted the campaign would continue and ultimately prevail. White House spokesman Joe Lockhart said Yeltsin told Clinton he would not allow Russia to be drawn into the Kosovo conflict.

Clinton was also asking the U.S. Congress for \$6 billion in emergency funding to help foot the bill.

U.N. chief Kofi Annan will visit Moscow on April 29 for talks on resolving the Kosovo crisis, following a scheduled April 26-28 trip to Germany, his

spokesman said.

Meanwhile, new fears were raised about the plight of refugees within Kosovo after the flow of ethnic Albanians into Albania and Macedonia dried up Monday.

Only 35 people, mostly from Pristina and Prizren, crossed the border to seek refuge in Albania within the last 30 hours, a spokesman for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said Monday night.

The UNHCR observed the same phenomenon on Macedonia's border with Yugoslavia, where not a single refugee had crossed by mid-day.

According to a UNHCR official a "very long" convoy of what looks like civilian vehicles was heading south from near the Kosovo capital Pristina Monday.

Citing unconfirmed reports the UNHCR said the convoy was between 20 and 25 kilometres long.

"The Serbian border is, allegedly or reportedly, formally open but no one's crossing, which makes U.S. believe that

the Serbs are basically stopping people and preventing them from reaching the border."

UNHCR spokesman Kris Janowski told a news briefing in Geneva.

"We are extremely concerned, since the people are terrified," he said.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair vowed to force Milosevic to pull his troops out of Kosovo and return the province to "the people to whom it belongs."

"You will be made to withdraw from Kosovo," Blair said in remarks aimed at Milosevic. He told the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development in London that an international military force would go in to secure Kosovo for its inhabitants.

Officials have said some 720,000 refugees have fled the country since the crisis between the Serbs and separatist Kosovars began last year and intensified with the NATO intervention on March 24. Some 850,000 are still wandering precariously in Kosovo, they said.

Arafat reverts to air diplomacy to win support and avoid critics

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Just days before Yasser Arafat must confront his domestic critics over the issue of an independent state, the Palestinian president landed on Monday in his 20th country in the space of two weeks.

In a frenetic campaign to win international support for an independent Palestinian state, Arafat arrived in Tunis on Monday from Mali and Senegal.

Arafat was expected back in Gaza City on Tuesday or Wednesday, officials at his office said, without being able to specify which country would be next on the Palestinian president's itinerary.

The Palestinian President had previously visited China, Mauritania, Libya, Kazakhstan, as well as stopping off in Pakistan for the second time in a week, all within the space of four days since leaving Gaza City on Wednesday.

In a whirlwind diplomatic offensive reminiscent of Arafat's peripatetic life when he was hunted by Israeli secret agents during the 1970s and 1980s, the PLO leader has been trying to garner support for his negotiating position ahead of May 4, when interim peace accords with Israel expire.

Arafat claims the peace agreements give the Palestinians the right to simply proclaim an independent state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip on May 4 since negotiations with Israel's right-wing government are deadlocked.

But most of the leaders he has met, including those of the United States and the European Union, have urged Arafat to delay proclaiming a state, at least until after Israeli elections due on May 17.

Arafat was last in Gaza City on Tuesday and, in a visit that

lasted a bare 24 hours, squeezed in a meeting of his cabinet and of the PLO Executive Committee.

The higher PLO Central Council is due to meet in Gaza on April 27 to take a final decision on whether to delay a statehood move.

Previously, Arafat had undertaken an eight-day trip which took him to 13 countries in the Far East, the former Soviet Union, Asia and Africa.

Whatever the diplomatic benefits of this latest tour there is also in Arafat's travels an element of avoiding his domestic critics.

Several Palestinian newspapers carried an article earlier in April by Ahmed Qourie, the speaker of the Palestinian legislature and a longtime Arafat advisor, in which he urged Arafat not to postpone the announcement of a state. Senior figures in Arafat's

own Fatah faction have also urged him to stick to the May 4 deadline.

But officials close to Arafat say he will delay the statehood declaration if the United States and Europe provide sufficient guarantees that they will back a later move towards independence and set down a firm time frame for negotiating a final peace accord with Israel.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has warned his party that he will take "extreme measures" in response to a unilateral declaration of independence, possibly including the annexation of parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip still under its control.

Meanwhile, the only commitments left untouched by the Arafat's diplomatic offensive appear to be Australasia and South America.

JORDAN TELEVISION

TEL 4773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

18:00French Programme
18:30 Children's Programme - Mirror, Mirror
19:00Le Journal
19:15Eating and Health
19:30News Headlines
19:33French Programme
20:00Drama - Plotlands
21:20 Documentary - Beyond 2000
22:00News in English
22:20French Series - Mozart

PRAYER TIMES

03:35Fajr
04:57(Sunrise) Duha
11:35Dhuhr
15:12Asr
18:12Maghreb
19:34Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifiah, Tel. 5920740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 4632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624590
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 4623366
Anglican Church Tel. 4624853/4624811
St. Afrem Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 4771751
Amman International Church Tel. 5865897
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 5688404
The Evangelical Local Church

In Amman Tel. 5811295

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel. 4654932
St. John the Baptist at De la Salle College Tel. 5661757
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 4637440
Greek Orthodox Church Tel. 4646138
Church of Presentation, Sweifiah Tel. 5920146
The United Catholic Church Tel. 4624757
The English-Language Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190
Evangelical Free Church Tel. 4892679
The Baptist Church Tel. 4628052
The Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 4771331
The American Orthodox Church Tel. 4775261

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Scattered showers are expected in various regions with temperatures dropping slightly. Skies will be partly cloudy and winds westerly moderate to active. In Aqaba, it will be relatively warm, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Amman13/24

Aqaba18/32
Deserts12/26
Jordan Valley17/31

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 31, Aqaba 39. Humidity readings: Amman 23 per cent, Aqaba 16 per cent.

Following are the temperatures expected today in the following areas:

Ajloun10/18
Jerash14/25
Um Qays13/24
Madaba12/24
Petra11/24
Dead Sea17/32

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

AMMAN:
Dr. Sa'ad Tawfiq4788285
Dr. Wissam Hazyayin4748563
Dr. Omar Yassin5336221
Dr. Khalid Abdo4657129

AMMAN:
Firas Pharmacy5661912
Al Salam Pharmacy 4636730
Mayadah Pharmacy5537004
Rukn Al Dawa Pharmacy 5536169

IRBID:

Dr. Ghazi Ta'anneh(02)250080
Fou'ad Pharmacy(02)275360

ZARQA:
Dr. Salah Saffarini(05)987565
Palestine Pharmacy(05)983562

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre4637111
Civil Defence Department5661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue4630341
Civil Defence Emergency199
Rescue Police192, 4621111, 4637777
Fire Brigade4617101
Jordan Hospital4775121
Blood Bank5343402
Highway Police4896390
Traffic Police4630321
Public Security Dept5658000
Hotel Complaints5661176
Water & Sewerage Complaints 489467
Amman Municipality Complaints 4787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance)121
Overseas Calls0132
Central Amman Telephone Repairs4623101
Abdali Tel. Repairs5661101
Jordan Television4773111
Radio Jordan4774111
Water Authority5680100
J. Electricity Authority5815615
Electric Power Co.4636381
RJ Flight Information44-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport44-53200

AMMAN:
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery5921199
The Islamic, Abdi5666131/7
Husseini Medical Centre5856856
Luzmila4630195
Khaldi Maternity4644281/6
Akliah Maternity4642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity4642362
Malhas, J. Amman4636140
Palestine, Shmeisani5607071
Shmeisani Hospital5607431
Jordan Hospital5607550
University Hospital5353444
Al-Musabir Hospital5667227/9
Al-Ahli, Abdali5664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen4777101/3
Al-Bashir4775111/26
Army, Marka4891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital5157100
Amal Hospital5607155
Al Amal Cancer Centre5353000
Jerusalem Hospital4387181

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery5921199
The Islamic, Abdi5666131/7
Husseini Medical Centre5856856
Luzmila4630195
Khaldi Maternity4644281/6
Akliah Maternity4642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity4642362
Malhas, J. Amman4636140
Palestine, Shmeisani5607071
Shmeisani Hospital5607431
Jordan Hospital5607550
University Hospital5353444
Al-Musabir Hospital5667227/9
Al-Ahli, Abdali5664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen4777101/3
Al-Bashir4775111/26
Army, Marka4891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital5157100
Amal Hospital5607155
Al Amal Cancer Centre5353000
Jerusalem Hospital4387181

ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital(05)983323
Zarqa National Hospital(05)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital(05)986731
Al Hikma Modern Hospital(05)990990

IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital(02)275555
Roman Catholic Hospital(02)272275
Ibn Al Nafies Hospital

.....(02)7101372, (02)7103101
Rosary Sisters Hospital(02)7103831, (02)7103011
Specialty Hospital(02)7103100

AMMAN:
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery5921199
The Islamic, Abdi5666131/7
Husseini Medical Centre5856856
Luzmila4630195
Khaldi Maternity4644281/6
Akliah Maternity4642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity4642362
Malhas, J. Amman4636140
Palestine, Shmeisani5607071
Shmeisani Hospital5607431
Jordan Hospital5607550
University Hospital5353444
Al-Musabir Hospital5667227/9
Al-Ahli, Abdali5664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen4777101/3
Al-Bashir4775111/26
Army, Marka4891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital5157100
Amal Hospital5607155
Al Amal Cancer Centre5353000
Jerusalem Hospital4387181

ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital(05)983323
Zarqa National Hospital(05)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital(05)986731
Al Hikma Modern Hospital(05)990990

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport. Tel. (44)53200-5, where it should always be verified. Information on other flights can be supplied on phone 44 (52700). Information on Royal Wings flights can be supplied on phone 4875201-5

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
06:00Damascus (RJ)
07:00Jeddah (add) (RJ)
07:25Aqaba (add) (RJ)
09:45Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
09:50Dubai, Muscat (RJ)
10:35Tehran, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
16:05Chicago, Shannon (RJ)
18:10London, Frankfurt (RJ)
19:45Tripoli (RJ)
23:25Beirut (RJ)

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

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10:35Tehran, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
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09:50Dubai, Muscat (RJ)
10:35Tehran, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
16:05Chicago, Shannon (RJ)
18:10London, Frankfurt (RJ)
19:45Tripoli (RJ)
23:25Beirut (RJ)

06:00Jeddah (add) (RJ)
07:00Jeddah (add) (RJ)

Other Flights

12:30Riyadh (SV)
13:10Abu Dhabi, Doha (GF)
17:05Tel Aviv (LY)
17:35Beirut (ME)
18:00Dubai, Damascus (EK)
18:10Paris (AF)
19:00Sanaa (Y)
20:40Amsterdam (KL)
23:35Larnaca (CY)
23:59Bucharest (RO)
00:25Istanbul (TK)
01:05Milan (AZ)
04:55London, Damascus (BA)

DEPARTURES

Royal Wings (RW) Flights

07:25 Aqaba (arriving at QALIA) (RW)
08:50 Aqaba (arriving at QALIA) (RW)
18:00 Aqaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)
18:45 Tel Aviv (arriving at QALIA) (RW)

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
06:00Damascus (RJ)
07:00Jeddah (add) (RJ)
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09:45Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
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09:45Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
09:50Dubai, Muscat (RJ)
10:35Tehran, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
16:05Chicago, Shannon (RJ)
18:10London, Frankfurt (RJ)
19:45Tripoli (RJ)
23:25Beirut (RJ)

12:15Cairo (RJ)
12:55Berlin, Brussels (RJ)
13:05London (RJ)
20:00Beirut (RJ)
20:20Jeddah (RJ)
20:40Damascus (RJ)
21:00Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
23:59Jeddah (add) (RJ)
02:00Jeddah (add) (RJ)

Other Flights

14

Baghdad calls on Lebanese to turn Arnoun into battle field



His Majesty King Abdullah Monday confers Al Hussein Medal of Excellence on Naser Shabaneh, a Jordanian poet, who won the Sharja Medal of Excellence for his poetry collection, entitled 'Cracks in the Earth.' The honouring ceremony, which took place at the Royal Court, was attended by Royal Court Chief Abdul Karim Kabariti (Petra photo)

Plenty of obstacles on road to Internet banking in Jordan

By Hind-Lara Mango

AMMAN — Banks are bridging the gap between their traditional working systems and the Worldwide Web, making financial transactions more cost-effective and competitive, but insufficient infrastructure and legal structure are hindering its implementation in Jordan, said Internet banking solution providers at a one-day seminar in Amman on Monday.

The "Relationship Banking Revolution and the Internet" seminar brought together local bank managers and senior executives to promote on-line banking in Jordan.

"The explosive growth of the Internet is causing many enterprises to rethink their business practices," said Zena Sati managing director of Concom Trading and Contracting Co., the organiser of the seminar.

"Banking markets have begun to recognise the opportunity to conduct business online and the momentum towards online banking is increasing," Sati said.

Electronic commerce is proving to give business a competitive advantage. Approximately 90 per cent of all banking transactions occur electronically today.

By bringing online banking to mass markets, banks hope to increase the number of electronic transactions and thereby reduce costs substantially.

"The number of Jordanian internet subscribers is growing daily with individuals the primary users," said Abdullah Rifai, managing director of International Data Exchange.

Internet was first introduced to Jordan in 1993 with the establishment of the National Information Centre (NIC) affiliated to the Higher Council for Science and Technology. The service became a reality to the public a year later.

For banking transactions to take place through the Internet in Jordan proper infrastructure must be established. Rifai noted that only small businesses were using this service.

"The lack of proper national infrastructure and telephone lines in some areas," and scarce digital transmission lease lines, were obstacles facing the Internet market in Jordan, he explained.

Seminar participants described "back-breaking" bureaucracy and the high-cost international bandwidth and local phone line installations as the largest hindrances to internet growth in the Kingdom.

The use of the Internet for banking operations requires that the legal system be adapted.

"A court requires a legal signature on financial transactions as a means of identification. With the use of the Internet in banking, this is no longer viable. Signatures are now digital," one participant told the Jordan Times.

The "E-commerce," as it is known, and brokering is fast becoming a commercial and public access network. It has doubled in size every year since 1988 and now has more than 35 million global users.

Seven out of the top 10 European banks have installed Internet banking systems in the past year.

"The branching of banks will cease as a result of Internet banking," said Ron Downey, co-founder of the Dublin based CR2 Limited, an international internet banking solution provider.

He told the Jordan Times that Lloyds of London Limited will be closing one third of its branches in England because of internet banking.

Information security is the main challenge faced by Internet banking. "People can attack your system or spoof their identity. But with existing technologies and their correct implementation, a secure system can be ensured," said Leo Corcoran, of the European Baltimore Information Security Specialists, one of the world's largest suppliers of E-commerce and enterprise security.

"Weak encryption or an electronic key, can be easily broken. But a strong encryption prevents any computer system from breaking it. Hackers who try to break security use brute force attack. They try to unscramble the key," said Corcoran to the Jordan Times.

Queen Noor visits NHF's Wadi Musa Jewellery Project

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor on Monday visited the Noor Al Hussein Foundation's Wadi Musa Jewellery Project, known as Al Amarat Jewellery Workshop, established in January 1996.

Queen Noor expressed her pride in the achievements of the women beneficiaries, who are being trained to manage the project on their own.

The NHF is looking to hand over the project to the local women by the end of this year, a practice which is in accordance with the foundation's comprehensive development programmes that advocate self-reliance and ultimate sustainable independence.

According to NHF's Executive Director Sima Bahous, all the women are from low-income families. Bahous said that the project has provided them with "job opportunities and a monthly income that ranges between JD80-200 as well as new skills in jewellery, management,

marketing and leadership. Many of them are the main family breadwinners."

Three women beneficiaries have already opened their own small businesses in production. The project has been supported by private sector training at shops in Amman.

Later, Queen Noor toured the ancient city of Petra with the Department of Antiquities Director Ghazi Bisheh and Petra National Trust Director Aysar Akrawi.

Queen Noor, who is honorary President of PNT, emphasised the importance of continuing to strike a balance that provides a more equitable distribution of employment, tourism income and other benefits among the local Petra community. She added that cooperation between the government, non-governmental organisations and the local residents is essential in achieving that balance.

UNICEF hosts Youth Forum today

AMMAN (J.T.) — The United Nations Children's Fund is hosting on Tuesday a Youth Forum to identify the needs and challenges facing the adolescents and youth in the society, especially girls.

"The forum aims at addressing new emerging issues related to adolescents which constitutes over 50 per cent of the Jordanian population, half of which are girls," said Mirak Elias, UNICEF Jordan country office representative.

The forum, which will be held under the patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Bint Talal, is part of the planning phase for a project for adolescent girls in Jordan. The project, which will be

carried out by UNICEF and its partners, will be implemented over the next two years.

Ms. Elias said that "one of the major objectives of the project is to strengthen the capacity of service providers dealing with adolescents, especially girls, to enable them to provide this group with quality services sensitive to their health, psychology and development needs."

During the three-day forum, 100 youth from different regions in the Kingdom will discuss issues related to violence, exploitation and the limited choices given to girls.

NEWS IN BRIEF

King receives Hijra congratulations

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Abdullah Monday received cables of congratulations on the occasion of the new Hijra year from Arab and Islamic leaders, as well as senior Arab officials. Cables came from King Hassan II of Morocco, Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh, President of Maldives Mamoun Abdul Qayyum, and the Moroccan Crown Prince Sidi Mohammed. The King also received an invitation from Tunisian President Zein El-Abidine Ben Ali to visit Tunisia. In the letter, President Ben Ali said Tunisia attached special importance to enhancing bilateral relations.

Queen Rania and Princess Basma return from UAE

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Abdullah Monday received Her Majesty Queen Rania and HRH Princess Basma Bint Talal upon their return from the United Arab Emirates, where they attended a ceremony to designate Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahyan, as the woman of the year 1998 in recognition of her humanitarian work. Also receiving the Queen and the Princess were HRH Crown Prince Hamzah, HRH Princess Zein Bint Al Hussein, Royal Court Chief Abdul Karim Al Kabariti, and senior officials.

King condoles Saudi King

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Abdullah Monday sent a cable of condolence to King Fahd Ben Abdul Aziz of Saudi Arabia, expressing his heartfelt condolences over the passing of HRH Prince Fahd Ben Sa'd Ben Saud Ben Abdul Aziz.

Cooler weather, humidity on the way

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan will be affected by a relatively cold low pressure, leading to a gradual drop in temperatures and high humidity starting on Tuesday, Meteorology Department Director Haitham Sha'er said. In a statement to the Arabic daily Al Rai, Sha'er said the weather will be partly cloudy with a slim chance of scattered rain.

British trade delegation arrives

AMMAN (Petra) — A British trade delegation arrives here on Tuesday on a several-day visit to Jordan to hold talks with Jordanian businessmen on investment opportunities in the Kingdom. The delegation includes representatives of 10 British companies specialised in tractor spare parts, dust control systems, potato seeds, gum, contact materials, and preservatives.

Islamists claim majority on UJ student council

By Tareq Ayyoub

AMMAN — Pro-Islamic candidates on Monday swept student council elections at the University of Jordan, retaining their grip on the council for the fifth year in a row.

The Islamists tallied up 43 seats on the 80-member council, comprising representatives of the 13 faculties at Jordan's oldest university.

The pro-government Watan (Homeland) candidates secured 20 seats, while the remaining seats went to independents, several of whom are known to be close to the Islamist movement.

At least five of the independent candidates who won the election are described as "close to the Islamists," one student who asked not to be named, told the Jordan Times. Islamists claimed their most decisive victories in the colleges of shari'a, literature, education, engineering, science, medicine, pharmacy, agriculture and nursing. They won few seats in other faculties. In the College of Law, they won only one out of the faculty's six seats.

Eye witnesses told the Jordan Times that anti-riot police were stationed near the university gates during the balloting and ordered many students who assembled to celebrate the victory to disperse peacefully.

Oqlah Mbadeen, dean of stu-

dent affairs, said following the elections that disciplinary actions will be taken against some students who resorted to "irresponsible acts after the elections."

The dean did not elaborate on the nature of the acts, nor did he name the individuals or groups who acted irresponsibly.

He told Jordan News Agency, Petra, that some students, in expressing their joy over the results, acted irresponsibly and would be penalised accordingly.

Ahmad Fayez, a candidate, said the Islamists are expected to form a coalition with independent council members, but ruled out a similar alliance with pro-government student representatives.

"I do not think a coalition between the Islamists and Watan is possible. There are many differences between the two camps," Fayez said after the elections.

If the coalition between Islamists and independents comes to fruition, the Islamists will cede two seats to independent candidates in the Administrative Council that concerns itself with student-university relations.

Pro-Islamist students oppose any normalisation of ties with Israel. They have staged several protests against Israel and the United States, particularly against U.S. administration's policy on

Iraq. The Islamists victory in the UJ elections came despite the introduction of the one-man one-vote system, which was perceived by the Islamists as an attempt to rout their influence.

"The results are a clear indication that the university's administration one-man one-vote system has failed to reduce the Islamists' influence inside the [university] campus," one student, who asked not to be named, said.

Before the introduction of the system, the movement claimed more than 70 seats. Islamists won elections at the Jordan University of Science and Technology, while they lost in Yarmouk and Muta University. All are government-run universities.

On Friday, their candidates swept the Jordan Medical Association elections, their second victory in less than two months. They earlier claimed the presidency of the Jordan Bar Association.

The Muslim Brotherhood Movement, and its political arm, the Islamic Action Front, is the biggest opposition group in Jordan. Together they led a boycott of the 1997 parliamentary elections, in which they were joined by nine opposition parties. But the movement's leadership said it plans to contest the upcoming municipal elections, scheduled to take place in July.

JTC disconnects 19,000 'bill dodgers,' but customers say the bills never arrived

By Mohammad Ben Hussein

AMMAN — The Jordan Telecommunications Company has partially disconnected the telephone lines of 19,000 "bill dodgers," who complain that the bills never reached their mail boxes for three months.

"The company has cut its service to subscribers who didn't pay December bills. We sent these bills to customers at least two months ago," Youssef Hadid, head of the Revenue Collection Department at the JTC told the Jordan Times on Monday.

According to Hadid, the company distributed the January bills one month ago, and the interruption of service was not inflicted on those whose January bills are still outstanding.

One foreign resident JTC customer, whose telephone line was partially disconnected on Sunday, contested.

"I have not received one single telephone bill since December 1998 [which was the November bill]," customer told

the Jordan Times. Customers usually get their monthly bills within three weeks of the end of the month.

"I always receive my bill, at the same address, in three weeks time. But when I approached the revenue director [Hadid] he told me that I must be mistaken," she said.

The JTC announced on April 7 that it had started distributing bills from January that were delayed due to a "technical error."

"It was not only me who didn't receive a phone bill. There were around 20 people holding vigil in the JTC with the same complaint," she said.

A group of citizens, on Sunday, sent a letter to an Arabic daily complaining about the same problem which they say was a hassle for them and caused problems at their places of work, let alone the embarrassment they felt in front of their clients.

"The company has issued bills for the delayed months altogether, or at a very close

period of time," the letter said. This, according to the letter, made it difficult to pay what was owed.

"The bill's value piled on us. We cannot pay the bills that way," said the letter which was signed by a group of people urging Jordan's only company to find a solution for their problem.

"If the company had a technical problem, why should we pay for its fault?" they asked.

The foreign resident raised another related issue. "The telephone bill for December was handed to me — after the phone was disconnected — with no itemisation, which I was told would take 'some time'."

The government is currently looking into different scenarios to privatise the company after a wide public outcry against inviting a foreign strategic partner to invest in the company.

Economists believe that privatising the company is the key factor in improving the services of the only telecommunications company in the country.

Election fever not catching in press association ranks

By a Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Changes last summer to the law governing the Jordan Press Association seem to have failed to inspire journalists' interest in upcoming JPA elections, even as the registration of candidates drew to a close on Monday evening.

"It's not a hot election because there is no competition," said Osama Maqadhi, director general of Al Mashraq, a publication monitoring media performance in Jordan.

Of three candidates, as of last night, vying for the JPA presidency, journalists say that only the reigning JPA president, Seif Sherif, has any chance of winning.

Sherif, the figurehead of Al Dustour Arabic daily, is ending his second term as president.

Although the JPA law states that the association's president can serve only two consecutive terms, Sherif was permitted to run again, after the Council for the Interpretation of Law determined that he was eligible to do so, since his second term was cut short by the new JPA law introduced last summer — a technicality journalists say that they are unhappy about.

"Sherif has been very pro-government," said Jamil Nimri, an Al Arab Al Yawm columnist.

"Our experience with him isn't good. He was not forceful enough in his dealing with the government and with the press itself. We expect more authority and more independence."

Journalists say this year's balloting will be a process of elimination, rather than an inspired vote, since the other two contenders — Musa Hawandeh, formerly of Al Arab Al Yawm, and Jamal Al-Alawi, of Al Dustour — don't enjoy support within the country's two oldest dailies, Al Dustour and Al Rai.

Although journalists expect the boisterous weekly press, who partly blame Sherif for failing to take a firmer stand against the government ahead of the introduction last summer of the 1998 Press and Publications Law, to throw their votes behind Hawandeh. But observers say that the weeklies' 50 votes will not be enough to overwhelm the two dailies, with 141 combined votes, the majority of which are expected to go to Sherif, who was favoured by the government in the last two elections.

"Had certain candidates stayed in the race, then we would have seen some surprises," said Maqadhi, referring to the decision of Mahmoud Al Kayed, former board chairman of the Jordan Press Foundation and tipped to soon be reappointed,

to drop out of the race. Sources close to Kayed told the Jordan Times earlier that Kayed said he would only quit the race if "another offer came on line."

There has been no official announcement of any new appointments to the Jordan Press Foundation's board.

Had Kayed run, journalists say the veteran journalist would have given incumbent Sherif a contest.

Journalists say Sherif's success in any new term will be determined by the nine-member council that is elected along with him.

At least three JPA council members — Nidal Mansour (Al Hadath weekly), Tareq Momani (Al Rai), and Nabil Ghishan (Al Arab Al Yawm) — are expected to run again.

Media professionals hope that the cancellation of the council's quota — under which three seats each were dedicated to representatives of the Jordan News Agency, Petra, newspaper owners and private sector papers — will help journalists instil a more professional council in an organisation that traditionally has suffered from government interference.

The full list of candidates will be announced on Tuesday.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILMS

- German film "Das Versteck" (with subtitles in English) at Goethe-Institut, Jabal Amman on Wednesday April 21 at 7:30 p.m.
- Fanny and Alexander at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabal Amman at 6:30 p.m.
- "Good Will Hunting" at Books@Cafe, Jabal Amman at 8:30 p.m. (Tel. 4650458).

LEBANESE FILM FESTIVAL

- Two Lebanese films entitled "Shadows" and "The Ghosts of Beirut" at the Royal Cultural Centre on Wednesday April 21 at 7:30 p.m.

AMMAN INTERNATIONAL THEATRE FESTIVAL

- Play "Das Letzte Band" (in Arabic) at the Royal Cultural Centre at 7:30 p.m. (Also showing Jordanian play "Misha" at 9:00 p.m.).
- Kuwaiti play "The Maids" at Osama Machini Theatre at 6:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

- First Computer Exhibition at Princess Sumaya University College for Technology of the Royal Scientific Society, until April 21.
- Works by Iraqi artists entitled "Iraqi Experiments at the Jordanian Plastic Art Association, Jabal Weibdeh, until April 22 (Tel. 4623297).
- Plastic art exhibition by Hussein Da'sa entitled "Horizons of the Nineties" at Orient Gallery, Shmeisani, until April 20 (Tel. 56813034).
- Works by Jordanian ceramist Mahmoud Taba at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh (Tel. 4643251/2), until May 6. Also showing an exhibition of photographs by Jordanian artist Adnan Sharif entitled "Spring at Darat Al Funun," until May 6.
- Works by Jordanian artist Shereen Audi Kurdi at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Amman, until April 28.
- Display of Iraq Al Amir collection at the Jordan Design and Trade Centre of the Noor Al Hussein Foundation until April 29 (Tel. 5699141/2). (The exhibition includes handicraft, pottery, hand-woven fabrics, cushions, handmade paper, and food).
- "Amman... A Meeting Point" by Swedish artists Ann Edholm and Hakan Rhenberg at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, until April 22.

CAA considers request to open private airlines

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Civil Aviation Authority is considering requests by a number of organisations to establish private airlines in Jordan to conduct irregular and chartered flights.

CAA Director General Jasser Ziyad was quoted as saying that if the permission is granted, private airlines will dedicate their operations to cargo and chartered flights but will not be allowed to operate along the same routes serviced by Royal Jordanian.

The government is considering the idea in line with its policy of privatising RJ, which means opening the door for competition, terminating the company's monopoly over the sector, and ending state subsidies it has provided to commercial institutions according to Ziyad.

He noted that the CAA is enlisting the services of financial and legal consultants to offer advice to the government and present their reports by the end of August, before a final decision can be taken.

Ziyad also said the government will give local companies priority to conduct such services. He said Jordanians should own the major equity in any new airline's capital and be able to honour their commitments.

The present laws and regulations do not allow the establishment of private air transport companies.

Queen Elizabeth begins landmark visit to S. Korea

SEOUL (AFP) — Britain's Queen Elizabeth II arrived in South Korea on Monday at the start of a culture-packed state visit hailed by Koreans as a symbol of the coming of age of their democracy.

The monarch's four-day trip is the first by a British head of state to this country in the two nations' 116-year diplomatic relationship.

"Whatever the content of the trip, the main significance will be that she has decided to come to Korea," Park Jung-Ho, a presidential spokesman, said noting the queen had not taken up invitations from former military rulers.

The queen, wearing a sky-blue suit with a wide-brimmed grey hat and matching handbag, arrived on a special flight from London with her husband, the Duke of Edinburgh, and Foreign Secretary Robin Cook.

The monarch met with President Kim Dae-Jung after paying tribute to Korean heroes and war dead.

The two heads of state discussed how to boost bilateral ties, notably on the economic front, and also discussed culture and the arts.

officials said.

Later in the day the royal couple got a wood-splintering introduction to Korean culture when black-belt Korean youngsters demonstrated the martial art of Taekwondo.

Hundreds of children waving Union Jacks lined the way on both sides of her motorcade into Midong Elementary School.

While the public focus of the visit is on culture and the arts, the ultimate aim is to boost trade and investment between the two nations as South Korea emerges from 15 months of devastating economic crisis.

It was the magic of royalty and the symbolism of the visit which dominated media headlines here, as newspapers devoted entire pages to the trip amid continuous television footage showing the queen and her family.

"The queen's visit is a very big moment for Korea as it can be seen as a tribute to our democratic development, incarnated in President Kim's quest for a democratic market system," Park Jung-Ho said.

"It serves as a catalyst for Korea's efforts to regain the confidence of the international community in its fast recovering economy," the English-language Korea Times said.



Queen Elizabeth II waves to Korean elementary school children as she arrives at Midong Elementary School in Seoul on Monday. Queen Elizabeth arrived in Seoul earlier Monday for a visit to promote bilateral ties and mark the 50th anniversary of the reestablishment of British-Korean diplomatic ties (AFP photo)

Most newspapers noted the queen was the best-known symbol of the world's oldest democracy, a history which sent a potent message about South Korea's progress from military dictatorship to full civilian democracy.

The public highlight of the trip will be the monarch's trip to the traditional village of Hahoe, southeast of here, where she will meet locals who will offer her Korean banquet fit for a queen to mark her 73rd birthday. The queen will also visit a car design centre using British technology and an animation production studio and will meet top business leaders, while the duke will visit the site of a new international airport.

Hopes of boosting Korean auto and electronics investment in Britain seem unlikely to be realised in the immediate term, however, as the country's grapples with recovery and balancing its red ink-splattered books.

British firms are taking advantage of investment opportunities presented by the opening of South Korea's markets under Kim's reforms, while Seoul firms have invested a total of \$1.52 billion in Britain.

Two-way trade between the two countries totalled almost \$6 billion last year despite a dramatic drop in Korean imports of British goods triggered by the crisis.

The queen is accompanied by 170 British veterans of the Korean war — in which 56,000 British troops helped South Korea repel an attack by the Communist North — as well as by a team of 30 industrialists.

Cook was to hold talks with his South Korean counterpart Hong Soon-Young.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Cambodia sets deadline to slash phantom army

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — The Cambodian government Monday vowed to cut out thousands of ghost soldiers from army ranks by next month, which will mark the start of an ambitious plan to slash its cumbersome military. Under the move announced by co-Defence Minister Tea Banh, army officers will be asked to declare the true number of fighters under their command rather than the usual inflated number that reaps them extra salaries. "This issue must be clear: there must be no secret deals and the demobilisation must be completed by 2002," Tea Banh told a gathering of defence ministry officials, army generals and diplomats. There are estimated to be at least 15,000 so-called "ghost soldiers" in the 148,000-strong armed forces, which the government hopes to eventually reduce by nearly two thirds in a massive demobilisation programme. Speaking at a conference outlining details of the scheme, Commander-in-Chief Ke Kim Yan said the defence ministry would "reward" officers declaring honest troop numbers, and "punish" those discovered to be lying when requested on May 15. Under strain financially and eager to capitalise on the defeat of the Khmer Rouge, the government announced the military cutbacks earlier this year ahead of a key international donor conference in Tokyo. Tea Banh said the total cost of the demobilisation would cost around \$103 million — mostly in \$1,200 per soldier redundancy payments — adding the World Bank, China and 10 other countries had already pledged support.

Five Ukrainian nuclear reactors reduce output; one shuts briefly

KIEV (AP) — A nuclear reactor was shut down briefly in Ukraine over the weekend due to a malfunction, while five more reactors reduced their output, officials said on Monday. Reactor No. 2 at the Rivne nuclear power plant was stopped for three hours before dawn Sunday after its automatic safety system suddenly shut down one of the reactor's turbine generators. The shut down came just as plant operators were preparing to stop another generator for repairs. Both generators were successfully repaired and the reactor went back on line early Monday, the state nuclear energy company Energoatom said. Of the five reactors that had their output reduced, three were scaled back to prevent an energy production surplus, while two underwent planned safety checks. Four of the five reactors were still operating at reduced capacity Monday, said the nuclear regulation administration, Ukraine's nuclear safety body. Reactor No. 3 at the Yuznya power plant was brought to full capacity late Sunday after its output was halved earlier in the day for a safety system check, energoatom said. Ukraine heavily depends on nuclear power, which accounts for more than 40 per cent of the former Soviet republic's electricity production. At the same time, Ukraine's nuclear officials acknowledge that the number of reactor malfunctions at the country's nuclear plants is growing because plants cannot afford to fully finance safety upgrades. Ukraine has five nuclear power plants that operate 14 reactors.

12 missing in Hungary after smuggling boat sinks

BUDAPEST (R) — Twelve people were believed to have drowned in Hungary when a boat packed with illegal migrants capsized after they crossed the frontier by river from Ukraine, a border guards spokesman said on Monday. Border guards arrested 17 Afghan and five Pakistani survivors near the village of Szatmarseke, 250 km east of Budapest, after the boat capsized in strong winds on the River Tisza on Sunday night. One of the Afghan survivors said those feared drowned were six adults, four children and two organisers of the smuggling operation, border guards spokesman Attila Krisan told Reuters. He said Hungarian and Ukrainian authorities were searching for those reported missing. Hungary is one of the main routes for Asian, African and East Europeans trying to migrate to Western Europe. In the space of just three days last week, 190 foreigners were arrested after crossing the border illegally, Krisan said. In 1995, 18 Sri Lankans trying to emigrate to Germany during the summer suffocated inside sealed containers after smugglers abandoned their trailer.

Living near estuary linked to adult leukaemia

LONDON (R) — People living near an estuary may have a bigger risk of developing leukaemia, according to research published on Monday. A report in the Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health showed that coastal areas in Britain where there is a lot of boating activity had a higher number of leukaemia cases than other regions of the country. The results of the study by Professor Nicholas Day, of the Institute of Public Health at Cambridge University, are consistent with earlier results linking estuaries with the disease. But unlike the previous research which attributed the cancers to heavy metals found in the estuaries, Day and his team believe the cause is exposure to products connected with the boating industry. "Both recreational and occupational activity would involve potential exposure to resins, solvents, paints and petroleum products which have been shown... to be risk factors for acute leukaemia," they said in the report.

Bad weather halts search for missing New Zealand plane

WELLINGTON (R) — Rain and fog curtailed a search for a missing tourist aircraft in New Zealand on Monday night just as rescuers received their first clue as to the possible whereabouts of the float-plane and its five occupants. A satellite picked up a faint emergency locator beacon signal in the rugged Bush of the Fiordland world heritage area, in New Zealand's far south, where the waterways airways single-engined Cessna 206 was lost during an hour-long scenic flight on Sunday. But national rescue co-ordination centre spokeswoman Emma Peel said nightfall and deteriorating weather meant a helicopter with direction finding gear sent to the area had to turn back. It was unclear if the signal... was from the aircraft, she said. "There's no way we can (identify it) without getting an aircraft out to the area where the beacon signal was heard and we can't do that in this weather and at night," she told Reuters. Four helicopters and three fixed wing aircraft had scoured the region during the day and another fixed wing aircraft was due to join the search on Tuesday. Peel said the searchers were still operating on the basis that the four passengers — the pilot and four adult members of the same New Zealand family — were alive. In the meantime she said, each hourly satellite sweep over the area was producing a "faint faint wiggle on the screen" which may or may not be a signal from the downed plane.

Yeltsin denies rift with PM

MOSCOW (AP) — President Boris Yeltsin said on Monday that he had no quarrel with his prime minister and warned that a rift between the two men would cause serious problems for Russia.

"Don't set me against Primakov, it's very grave for the nation," Yeltsin told reporters in the Kremlin.

The Russian media has been speculating about possible friction between the two, saying that Yeltsin resents Primakov's popularity and does not like the prime minister's friendly relations with the Communists in parliament.

Primakov was also slow to speak out publicly against the Communist-led impeachment debate against Yeltsin, which has been postponed until mid-May.

The motion is expected to fail, but the debate could further weaken Yeltsin's authority, already eroded by his frequent illnesses and Russia's economic crisis.

Yeltsin suggested earlier this month that Primakov's job is less than secure.

"I believe that Primakov is useful at this stage, and later

we shall see," the president said recently.

Yeltsin said Monday that he and prime minister had respect for each other, but then the president said he was instructing Primakov on how to take criticism.

"I'm teaching him so that he gets accustomed to that," Yeltsin said. "Is the cabinet working faultlessly? No, it isn't. So, why get hurt?"

Yeltsin has a long history of jealousy guarding his power and quickly dismissing officials who appear to be encroaching on his authority. He fired two prime ministers last year and regularly shakes up his Kremlin staff.

Primakov was named prime minister in September to deal with the worst economic crisis since the Soviet collapse. He has taken control over most of the government's daily affairs.

Yeltsin, who was sidelined by a steady string of illnesses, initially had only the words of praise for Primakov. But since recuperating, Yeltsin has been chiding the prime minister in public.

Police investigate mystery London bomb blast

LONDON (AFP) — British police Monday stepped up their investigation into a mystery bomb blast in London which wounded nearly 50 people at the weekend, seeking clues to who was responsible.

They continued to scour the area for evidence and began sifting through video pictures from surveillance cameras in the hope that the bomber or bombers have been caught on film.

No one has claimed responsibility and police have drawn a blank about the motive for the attack, in a busy market in south London on Saturday afternoon.

Police said 39 people, including four police officers, were taken to hospitals, many requiring surgery to remove shrapnel and nails, after the blast near an underground rail station and

a supermarket in Brixton.

As 15 people — including a 23-month-old toddler who underwent an operation to have a nail removed from his skull — remained in hospitals across London, Queen Elizabeth II sent a message of sympathy to the victims.

A Buckingham Palace spokeswoman said the queen, who is on a visit to South Korea, wished all the victims a speedy recovery.

The toddler was said to be in a stable condition at the Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital after surgeons removed a nail from his head, two centimetres of which had lodged in his brain.

There were fears that two male victims, aged 61 and 52, who suffered severe eye injuries, could lose their sight. One of the two, who have both undergone

surgery, was described as being in a "serious" condition.

Most of the injured were treated for cuts from flying glass and the nails which were packed into the device, which was apparently hidden in a plastic bag.

Police have already ruled out the possibility that the Irish Republican Army (IRA) was behind the attack, given the crudeness of the device and the target, a poor area of London with black, Caribbean-origin population.

Junior Home Office minister Kate Hoey also said there was no evidence to link the attack with the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia.

Speculation was focusing on feuding gangsters, animal rights activists or a deranged lone bomber. A race attack designed to

maim and kill was another theory because of the location of the attack.

Commander Hugh Orde of the London Metropolitan Police, head of crime for south-west London, said police were keeping an open mind about who planted the device but branded those responsible "disturbed".

A Scotland Yard spokeswoman said a mobile police station would remain for the time being at the scene to encourage the public to approach the police with any information they have.

On Monday, a semblance of normality was returning at the scene of the bombing, with the many broken windows at street level and above the only signs of the incident.

A few market traders stolidly set up their stalls just metres from where the bomb went off.

China says Korean Air flight recorder believed destroyed

SHANGHAI, China (AP) — Investigators believe a flight recorder that might help explain a Korean Air crash last week that killed nine people was destroyed in the disaster, a Chinese spokeswoman said on Monday.

The shell of the cargo plane's flight-data recorder was found Sunday, but not the recorder itself, said Cao Yi of the Shanghai city foreign affairs office.

Such devices record the operations of a plane's on-board systems and can help investigators reconstruct the cause of a crash.

"It can be concluded that the flight-data recorder has

been destroyed," Cao said.

Police are searching the wreckage at a construction site on the outskirts of Shanghai for a second device that records cockpit conversations, but "the most important recorder tape hasn't been found," she said.

The three-member crew and six people on the ground were killed when the McDonnell Douglas MD-11 crashed Thursday just minutes after takeoff. Thirty-three people were injured, six of them seriously.

Bodies of two crew members have been found in the wreckage, Cao said, contradicting a report Sunday by

Korean Air that all three bodies had been recovered.

Chinese investigators have been joined by officials of Korean Air and the South Korean government, as well as five officials from the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board and Federal Aviation Administration.

A spokeswoman for Korean Air said the airline held out hope the flight-data recorder might still be found.

"It could be destroyed in the crash. Or a resident there could have taken it, mistaking it for something else. Or it is there and we just didn't find it yet," said the Korean Air official, who declined to

be identified further.

U.S. officials weren't immediately available Monday for comment. Thomas McLean, a spokesman in Beijing for Boeing Co., which owns McDonnell Douglas, said the company had no new information.

Korean Air has suggested a bomb may be to blame for the crash, but the airline also has suffered a string of safety problems.

Witnesses said they saw no smoke or flames coming from the plane before the crash, and Chinese officials haven't commented on the possible cause.

Russian fleet begins exercises in Black Sea

SEVASTOPOL. Ukraine (AP) — Russia's Black Sea fleet began military exercises Monday that the fleet's commander said were not linked to the Kosovo crisis.

About 30 warships were to head out of port for a series of exercises over the next several days from the fleet's base in Sevastopol on Ukraine's Crimean peninsula, a fleet spokesman said.

Spokesman Andrey Grachev said the manoeuvres would last 10 days, but

declined to say when the ships head out.

Meanwhile, Ukraine's Black Sea fleet, also based in Sevastopol, began its own six-day manoeuvres Monday that involve 15 ships. The ships were to conduct a joint exercise with Russian vessels, Grachev said.

The timing of the Black Sea exercises has raised speculation that they are part of Russia's angry reaction to NATO's bombard-

ment of Yugoslavia. Russia fiercely opposes NATO's air strikes on Yugoslavia, but its response has been largely symbolic.

Russian navy chief of staff Adm. Viktor Kravchenko, who arrived in Sevastopol to oversee the manoeuvres, said over the weekend the exercises had been planned and were not related to the Kosovo conflict.

Russia's three other naval fleets, the Northern, Baltic and Pacific Fleets, are all

holding exercises or recently held them.

Russia earlier sent a reconnaissance ship from Sevastopol to the Adriatic to watch NATO vessels. Russian officials have said that several more ships might be dispatched to the region, though no such order has yet been given.

The Russian naval deployment in the Adriatic has displeased NATO and the United States.

'More than 120,000 child soldiers in Africa'

LONDON (R) — More than 120,000 children, some as young as seven, are serving as soldiers in Africa, a report published by a group of human rights and peace organisations said on Monday.

The U.K. Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, which includes the British arms of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Amnesty International, urged governments in Africa to stop recruiting minors under 18 into their armed forces.

"Some children volunteer to join the armed forces but tens of thousands of children are forced to join up, sometimes at gunpoint," the group said in a news release issued by UNICEF.

"Government-sponsored militias pose particular problems, as they are not adequately trained or moni-

tored, but the worst abuses have been committed by armed opposition groups," it added.

Boys were the main target of recruitment, but girls were also being sought by rebel groups and given to their members as wives. Those who refused to conform were killed to serve as an example to others, the report said.

"When not engaged in combat, children are often used to man checkpoints. Adults tend to stand further back so that if bullets start flying, the children will be the first victims," it said.

The report alleged children had been recruited by either governments or rebel groups in African nations including Angola, Burundi, Congo-Brazzaville, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Sudan and Uganda.

IN BRIEF

India sets deadline for phantom army

India sets deadline for phantom army
The Indian government has set a deadline of May 15 for the withdrawal of the 10,000-strong Indian army from the border area of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. The army has been in the area since the end of the 1990s. The government has said that it will not allow the army to remain in the area for more than 18 months. The army has been in the area since the end of the 1990s. The government has said that it will not allow the army to remain in the area for more than 18 months.

Iranian nuclear reactors put: one shuts briefly

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Iran has shut down one of its nuclear reactors for a brief period. The reactor is located in the city of Bushehr. The shutdown was due to a problem with the reactor's cooling system. The reactor was shut down for about 24 hours. The Iranian government has said that it will not allow the reactor to remain in the area for more than 18 months.

Boat sinks in Hungary after glancing

Boat sinks in Hungary after glancing
A boat has sunk in Hungary after glancing off a pier. The boat was carrying a number of people. The accident occurred in the city of Budapest. The boat was hit by a pier and sank. The accident resulted in the death of several people. The Hungarian government has said that it will not allow the boat to remain in the area for more than 18 months.

Leukaemia near estuary to adult

Leukaemia near estuary to adult
A case of leukaemia has been reported near an estuary. The case is believed to be related to the pollution in the area. The leukaemia is a type of cancer that affects the blood. The case is believed to be related to the pollution in the area. The leukaemia is a type of cancer that affects the blood.

Search for New Zealand plane

Search for New Zealand plane
A search for a New Zealand plane has been launched. The plane was last seen on the coast of New Zealand. The search is being conducted by the New Zealand coast guard. The plane is believed to be a small private plane. The search is being conducted by the New Zealand coast guard.



President of the Congress (I) Party Sonia Gandhi (centre) greets a colleague as senior Congress leaders Sharad Pawar (left) and Manmohan Singh sit by prior to a Congress parliamentary party meeting at parliament on Monday, in New Delhi. Sonia Gandhi vowed to form an alternative government following the fall of the Hindu nationalist coalition (AFP photo).

Irish premier in London for fresh Northern Ireland talks

LONDON (R) — Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern arrived in London on Monday for crucial talks with Britain's Tony Blair and Northern Ireland politicians aimed at breaking a deadlock over guerrilla disarmament.

The meeting comes just hours after the political wing of the IRA guerrillas — who are refusing to decommission, or hand over, their weapons — said the peace process was in free fall.

Blair and Ahern, anxious to end years of bloodshed in Northern Ireland, will meet leading politicians from the British province on the issue that has threatened the peace process since the much-trumpeted Good Friday deal in April last year.

Earlier this month, attempts by Blair and Ahern to broker an agreement were rebuffed during gruelling all-night talks at Hillsborough castle near Belfast.

Ahern did not speak to reporters as he arrived. Leading Protestant politician David Trimble, Northern Ireland's first minister, said urgent progress was needed.

"Our objective is to see if it is possible, as soon as possible, to implement all aspects of the agreement of last year... that includes the very crucial aspect of (weapons) decommissioning," he said.

Voices raised in Northern Ireland at the weekend gave little cause for optimism about a shift in position.

"I think the agreement is in free fall," Gerry Adams, president of the Irish Republican Army's political wing Sinn Fein, told reporters in Belfast on Sunday.

Adams said he had no confidence Britain was prepared to "trigger" the creation of a

Protestant-Catholic power-sharing administration envisaged in the peace accord.

Trimble, who represents the province's pro-British Protestant majority, urged Protestant extremists to surrender their arms, suggesting this could prompt the IRA to follow suit.

"I would like to appeal to them to discharge their responsibility as well and I remind the Loyalist paramilitaries that they said before the agreement they would be prepared to decommission alongside Republican paramilitaries," he said.

The comments of the rival leaders, whose parties are supposed to share power in a ruling executive under the terms of last April's accord, highlighted the gulf between them.

Blair and Ahern will have separate meetings with three parties that signed the deal —

Sinn Fein, the Ulster Unionist Party and the Social Democratic and Labour Party.

"We are in listening mode," said a British official.

Progress on the peace accord has been stalled by the deadlock over disarmament.

Trimble refuses to sit in a coalition structure with Sinn Fein until the IRA hands in arms as proof that its war against British rule in Northern Ireland is truly over.

The peace process suffered a setback last week when several key parties, as well as the IRA and Protestant-backed "Loyalist" guerrillas, rejected a London-Dublin blueprint for progress as a way of getting round the current impasse.

Sinn Fein dismissed the blueprint as a breach of the peace accord, arguing that it sided with Trimble's demand for a weapons handover before the party could enter government.

MBARARA, Uganda (AFP) — Uganda has deployed more troops in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to guard its border near a game park where eight tourists were killed during a rebel attack last month.

Western Ugandan military commander Lieutenant Colonel Benon Biraro told journalists Sunday that close to a battalion had been deployed to guard against any further incursions into western Uganda's tourist attractions and in areas of eastern DRC.

Ugandan troops are backing a Tutsi rebellion fighting DRC President Laurent Kabila and Kampala says the need to protect its borders justifies such military support.

On March 1, some 200 fighters of the Hutu extremist Interahamwe militia based in the DRC attacked tourist camps in Uganda's Bwindi National Park, killing four Britons, two U.S. citizens, two New Zealanders and a Ugandan guard.

Biraro vowed that such attacks in the park, one of the last habitats of rare mountain gorillas, would not be repeated.

"What we have put in place is enough for the Interahamwe. We can now guarantee security at all tourist spots in western Uganda," Biraro said at his office in Mbarara, some 320 kilometres west of the capital.

He disclosed that the army has so far killed about 40 of the rebels believed to have carried out the March attack.

Biraro said Uganda has stepped up security since the killings, both within its borders and in the DRC. Local militias have been reactivated to monitor the movements of strangers and report them to the security personnel in the area.

Park rangers have been given more arms, he added.

Morale among the rangers is low, largely because of their meagre pay. The Uganda Wildlife Authority has promised them new salary scales.

A low-ranking ranger is paid 50,000 Ugandan shillings (about \$35 a month, while the highest-paid receive an equivalent of about \$140 a month.

German parliament reclaims 'new' Reichstag

BERLIN (AP) — Parliament inaugurated its new home in the stately restored Reichstag on Monday, a landmark occasion in the government's return to its prewar capital Berlin.

Brass bands, waving flags and beaming lawmakers welcomed the historic moment, heralded as a milestone in Germany's development since World War II into a strong, solid democracy.

A sombre tone mixed with the celebrations, as politicians noted that the government's return to Berlin — capital of Prussian militarism and Third Reich horrors, German power at its most terrifying — comes just as German troops participate in NATO strikes against Yugoslavia, their first attack on a sovereign nation since World War II.

Paramount in Chancellor Gerhard Schröder's speech was reassurance and confidence that the government's return to Berlin, coupled with its action in war over Kosovo, was not a return to German aggression against its neighbours.

"Our democracy and our parliament are strong and stable," Schröder said. "The move to Berlin is not a break in the continuity of German postwar history."

He defended Germany's role in NATO strikes as its "historic responsibility... as a land that had two dictatorships in this century, as a land that brought genocide and aggression over our continent."

Schröder also reflected on the importance of Berlin — once divided into Communist East and allied-controlled, capitalist West — as the "hinge of European unity." Moving to Berlin means shifting Germany's seat of power eastward, which politicians also

hope will bridge the stubborn gap between the nation's former Communist eastern states and its more prosperous West.

Reopening the Reichstag after a 600 million mark (\$330 million) is the first big step in the move from Bonn, the provincial Western city where West Germany's capital was relegated after World War II.

Next come the election of a new German president in the Reichstag and the new parliament session in September, the first to open in the new building.

To thunderous applause, parliament president Wolfgang Thierse promised lawmakers that the change in location did not mean a change in politics.

"We don't want another kind of policy, but a tranquil move as possible from Bonn to Berlin," he declared.

Berlin's grim past had made the government's return there a

subject of concern, debate and controversy. But the new Reichstag, as transformed by architect Sir Norman Foster, is as light as the capital's legacy is dark.

Glass walls surround the central parliament chamber where Schröder spoke, and an immense, new glass dome atop the old building channels natural light on to the lawmakers below.

"I want this glass dome to become a symbol for the openness and transparency of our democratic politics," Schröder said.

In addition to modern changes, the architect also preserved the building's original 19th-century exterior, as well as wartime scars inside — damage from bombs and fires, and graffiti left behind by Soviet army soldiers who seized the building in 1945.

Edi, an official at the Cipto Mangunkusumo's emergency room, said police had brought in four people "lightly injured by glass shards" in the blast.

"We were all praying on the second floor and we came downstairs there were pieces of shattered glass everywhere," said a man who answered the telephone at the mosque, who refused to give his name.

A security guard at the complex said two men rushed from the area and left on a motorcycle shortly before the blast, the state Antara news agency said.

In past months Muslim-Christian clashes in the country's Maluku islands have claimed more than 250 dead.

Clashes between Muslims and Ambonese Christians broke out in Jakarta in November, leaving 13 people dead and several churches burned and damaged.

Blast rocks Jakarta main mosque, police chief calls for calm

JAKARTA (AFP) — A blast rocked Jakarta's main Islamic mosque during afternoon prayers Monday destroying a ground-floor office and injuring eight people, reports said.

Initial reports of casualties were confused, but there was no mention of any deaths in the blast which ripped through a ground floor office of the huge white-domed Istiqbal mosque in the centre of the city.

Jakarta's police chief, Major General Nugroho Jayusman, immediately called for calm, and said on television that whoever was responsible was attempting to "divide the country's religious communities."

"Their aim is to divide the religious communities, so that the agenda of reform is disrupted," he told reporters, continually using the word "blast" and refusing to use the word "bomb."

"The president said this is an act aimed at creating a situation of conflict between religions," Investment Minister Hamzah Haz quoted President B.J. Habibie, a Muslim, as saying.

He had been meeting with Habibie when the president was informed by an adjutant of the explosion.

Haz, who also heads the Muslim United Development Party, also called on Muslims, who make up more than 90 per cent of this nation of some 202 million people, to stay calm.

"I am calling on all Muslims not to fall for this terrorist act which only wants to spread chaos amidst us," Haz said.

He also said he was convinced the intention was to disrupt the upcoming general elections and undermine the authority of the government.

Television showed the blast tore through one of the offices

near the Indonesian Council of Ulema, the highest authority on Islamic affairs in the country. But Jayusman said the mosque's structure was undamaged.

The glass windows in at least five neighbouring offices were blown out by shock waves from the explosion, television showed.

"I heard that three were rushed to the Islam hospital, and three others were taken to the health clinic at the ministry of religion," said a police officer, who identified himself as Karno, by telephone from the Sawah Besar district police office.

But a nurse at the hospital said only one person had been admitted from the blast, and had been released after treatment.

"She was treated for wounds from shattered glasses," the nurse, who identified herself as Heni, told AFP.

actually pass the fractious 45-party lower house on Wednesday before inviting anyone to form a government.

Mrs. Gandhi needs the support of the five Communist and leftist parties in parliament, but two of them, with a total of seven lawmakers — the revolutionary Socialist Party and the forward block — could not be persuaded to drop their opposition for the Congress Party.

"If we didn't have differences why would we be meeting?" Communist leader A.B. Bardhan told the Associated Press after a meeting of the Communist groups. He said further discussions would be held after the budget is approved.

The stock market, which plunged 7 per cent when Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee lost the confidence vote Saturday, responded positively to the news that the pro-business budget would pass by rising 3.7 per cent. Without it, the government would run out of spending power by mid-May, tax provisions that went into effect in April would have to be reversed, and investors would see India as even more risky.

But business and industry remain nervous about the strong possibility of India's

Indian political groups try to sink differences to form government

NEW DELHI, India (AP) — Sonia Gandhi and the Congress Party said on Monday they are waiting for the president to call them to lead a new government, but gave no clue about what form it will take.

"We are certainly going to form the government," Mrs. Gandhi told reporters after meeting her party's parliament members. She said she didn't know yet whether that government would be a coalition, but said "consultations are going on with members of the other parties." But differences flared up among the groups that could support a Congress government, belying Mrs. Gandhi's optimism.

Congress leaders said they had unanimously agreed to let Mrs. Gandhi, their prime ministerial choice and a political novice, take whatever decisions are needed to form a new government.

Also, the Congress party agreed that the proposed budget of the outgoing Hindu nationalist-led government, would be adopted Wednesday without debate. "We do not want to create any financial crisis arising out of the non-passage of the annual budget," Mrs. Gandhi told the party lawmakers.

Politicians believe President K.R. Narayanan is waiting for the budget to

third election in as many years if Congress, which has fewer seats in parliament than Vajpayee's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), fails to muster a stable government.

"As soon as there is an invitation from the president, Sonia Gandhi will call on him and the rest of the constitutional process will ensue," Congress Party spokesman Arjun Singh told reporters. "There is no need for mid-term elections. There will be no problem in forming an alternative government."

However, the BJP charges that Congress does not have enough support to form a long-term majority coalition, and says the president should reject anything less, since he demanded that Vajpayee show he had support from a majority of parliament before he took office 13 months ago.

"The Congress Party can't provide a viable alternative government," BJP spokesman Venkaiah Naidu said Monday. "The choice is the Vajpayee government or fresh elections."

Mrs. Gandhi met Monday with a key player, Jayaram Jayalalitha, the mercurial leader of a southern party that triggered the political crisis by withdrawing from Vajpayee's government last week.

"We are all determined to see that an alternative government is in place in the next two days," Jayalalitha told reporters as she emerged from Mrs. Gandhi's house. "We are all determined to ensure that the BJP government will not be allowed to continue as a caretaker government."

Although "all parties are agreed to pass the budget as it is," Congress Party parliament leader Sharad Pawar said the new government will have the right to make amendments, something that makes business nervous because of the compromises Congress may have to make with some of its leftist allies.

Opposition parties are unable to agree whether Congress should form a minority government by itself with support from Communists and socialists on crucial parliamentary votes or cobble together a coalition with other parties.

Also Monday, lawmaker Saifuddin Soz from Kashmir, who voted against Vajpayee on Saturday, was expelled from his National Conference Party, which had decided to vote with the government.

"The people of Kashmir have not given me the mandate to support the BJP," Soz said. "This was the voice of my conscience."

Uganda sends more troops to Congo

MBARARA, Uganda (AFP) — Uganda has deployed more troops in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to guard its border near a game park where eight tourists were killed during a rebel attack last month.

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Vietnamese woman offers one of her eyes to blind student

HANOI (AFP) — A 62-year-old woman from Ho Chi Minh City said on Monday she is willing to donate one of her eyes to a blind student provided such a transplant from a living donor is possible.

Huynh Thi Ngoc Suong said that she wants doctors to remove one of her eyes so that promising 23-year-old blind student, Nguyen Truong Van can gain sight, but is unsure whether such an operation would be successful.

"The doctors fear that I will lose one eye without being able to help Van," she told AFP.

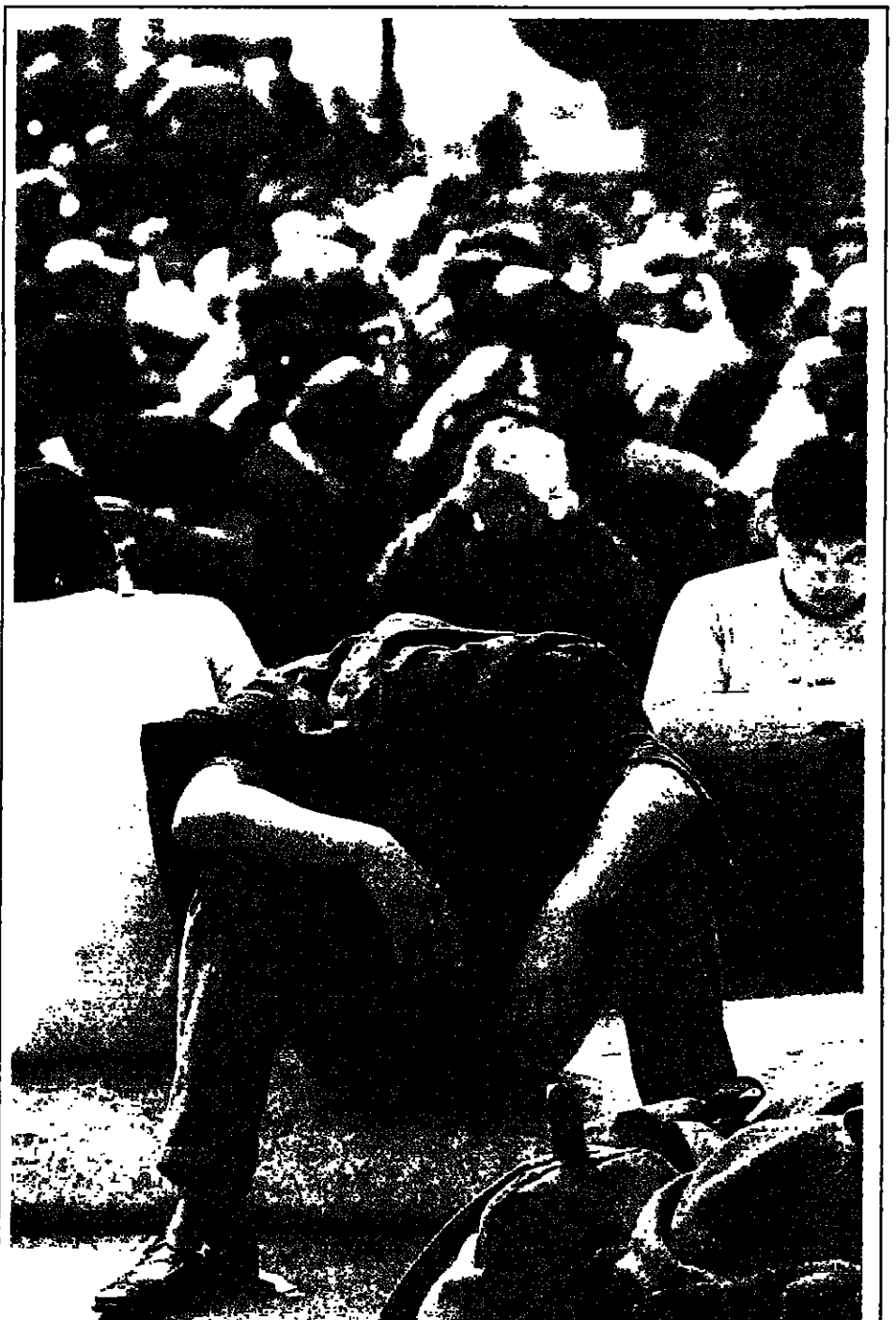
"I regret I cannot give him my eye right now, but I hope we will find the technology to do so in the future," she added. Suong said she decided to offer sight to the young man after reading in the press that Van had been offered a scholarship to study computing by the Japanese government.

After first telling doc-

tors of her intention, Suong was told no successful transplant of an eye from a living donor has been performed in Vietnam.

"But I intend to keep my intention of donating one of my eyes to him," she said.

Van lost his sight at the age of three after contracting measles, but has demonstrated an unusual aptitude for music, and released an album of folk-songs last year.



Students sit after maintaining an all-night vigil in front of Seoul's Myongdong Cathedral Monday, to avoid riot police as they wait to join striking workers at a protest rally. Subway union workers start striking today, and other KCTU (Korea Confederation of Trade Unions) members will engage in nationwide strikes and hold rallies in Seoul until May Day to protest the government's economic policy (AFP photo).

Jordan Times

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Bless the new era

PRIME MINISTER Abdur-Rau'f S. Rawabdeh used the right term to describe the performance of the state-run media in his meeting with official news directors at Jordan Television on Monday. He said the state media people were the best example of a "terrorised administration that has turned totally uninnovative." From our experience in the semi-official print we understand what is happening to our colleagues at radio, television and the news agency, Petra. They are really the last to blame for the shameful state of the media performance. Over the past 10 years, those people have seen at least half a dozen information ministers take turns at the helm of the state media. Those men were as diverse as Noam Chomsky and Jerry Falwell. Each one of them had his own ideas, and none of them had time to put his ideas to the test. But that is not all. As the prime minister alluded yesterday, media leaders are being bombarded with telephone calls all day long from the different spin doctors who aide senior figures demanding that their news and views be aired on radio, television or by Petra. And if those media leaders did not oblige they would be ostracised, boycotted or subjected to a hate campaign. That is why news on radio or television is being criticised as uninformative, and following protocol rather than events and issues.

Having said that we do not think that the fault is in people; after all, most successful TV satellite stations are manned by Jordanian anchor-men and women and producers. We believe the only way to reform the media is to allow greater autonomy, both financially and editorially. These news organisations should be run by independent bodies that include businessmen, journalists and leading writers. The BBC, which constantly offends British governments but nevertheless remains the most credible media corporation worldwide, was cited by at least two former information ministers as an example to emulate. Petra could be sold to the newspapers, the major clients of the agency.

However, we have little faith that the prime minister's tough message yesterday would lead to any improvement in the media performance unless it is followed by a concerted effort to address the problem in earnest. We have heard the state media come under even harsher criticism in the past few years.

But, we remain hopeful. We agree with the prime minister that we see and feel that His Majesty King Abdullah and his team of aides are determined to usher in a new era of openness and to strengthen democracy. And we agree with the prime minister that the media, including the press, have a greater role to play in the process and in propagating Jordan's message to the Arab World.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Tareq Masarweh said that this is a time when general assemblies of public shareholding companies meet to elect their boards of directors. In this regard the Ministry of Trade and Industry has to be aware that tough monitoring and citizen protection is the most important duty of the ministry, said Masarweh, who added that citizens must always remember that the court is the final reference to protect their money and interests. It is nothing new to say that there is "terrifying" corruption in such companies, as some influential families control these corporations, according to the writer. Although rich families have the right to own companies, banks or factories, it is not fair if some of them dominate a company just because they own 10 per cent of the shares, ignoring investors who hold the remaining 90 per cent, argued Masarweh, hence the role of the comptroller. In order to attract investments for the Kingdom's economy, tough governmental monitoring is a must to reassure local and foreign investors that corruption will not affect them, Masarweh argued.

Al Dostour's Mazen Saket said that with the current changes in Jordan's economy and the process of transferring economic activity from the public to the private sector, organisation of social insurance is necessary for the latter's employees. The umbrella of social insurance is only limited to ensure the elderly or those who suffer work-related injuries, and ignores important aspects such as health insurance for workers and their families, said Saket. Although many studies were undertaken on this issue, hundreds of thousands of people are not included in this important insurance, according to the writer. Economic changes, living standards and the high cost of treatment stress the importance of including health insurance in any social insurance, he said. The government spends one-sixth of its budget on the health sector, an amount, Saket said, that does not match the quality of health services provided to citizens.

Kosovo is warning for Palestine and Israel

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM —

The Kosovo crisis has reinvigorated the historical and moral debate that was initiated last year among Israelis and Palestinians about the real causes of the Palestine refugee problem 50 years ago. Did Jewish forces in 1947-48 deliberately use ethnic cleansing, terror, guerrilla warfare, and conventional military attacks against Palestinians in order to drive them out of their villages, expand Jewish-controlled land, and create the state of Israel? Most Arabs say yes, most Israelis say no.

The tragic mass refugee waves in Kosovo have rekindled pivotal questions here, such as: Did the 1948 Palestinian and 1999 Kosovar refugee exodus result from a similar combination of deliberate ethnic cleansing along with a mass flight of frightened civilians caught in a war zone? Does the international community's insistence on the right of Bosnian and Kosovar refugees to return home also extend to similar rights for Palestinian and other refugees? In view of NATO's decisive diplomatic and military action, should the Palestinians demand greater international efforts to ensure their right of return or compensation?

Israelis see Kosovo as confirming their insistence on being strong enough to defend themselves, and not relying on the promises of others. Many Israelis see in Kosovo and Bosnia a brutal reminder of the world's tendency to do nothing or very little, or to act

too late, in the face of war crimes, genocide, and other brutalities that result in mass deaths and suffering by innocent people. Some Israelis fear that NATO's intervention in Kosovo may one day encourage the Palestinian Arabs in Israel to demand similar autonomy or national rights.

This agonising Arab/Israeli self-assessment in the mirror of Kosovo's brutality may have a positive side: it may be pushing reasonable Arabs and Israelis to realise that our pasts and futures are intertwined, that we have both brutalised each other in different ways, and that we will only get beyond this cycle of violence by working for the mutual and equal national rights of Israelis and Palestinians. Not autonomy, not occupation, not racist and Apartheid-like laws and White Man's Highways — but equality in national, moral, and human rights.

The former Israeli municipal official Meron Benvenisti wrote last week that it was "infuriating and totally baseless" to accuse pre-state Zionists in 1947-48 of conducting a Serbian-like campaign of terror, rape and murder in order to expel the Palestinians and take over their homes and lands; but, he added, "the deportation of the Palestinian population after the establishment of the state, and certainly from mid-June 1948, comes dangerously close to the definition of ethnic cleansing, and certain events took place that could undoubtedly be defined as 'war

crimes'... the some 380,000 additional refugees who left or were expelled after the establishment of the state [of Israel] are indeed the victims of ethnic cleansing." (Haaretz, April 16, 1999).

Such thoughtful self-exploration of the full moral, historical, and political dimensions of Israel's own past is mirrored on the Palestinian side by an equally important commitment to discovering the truths of recent history. An impressive expression of this is a book entitled *Jerusalem 1948: The Arab Neighbourhoods and their Fate in the War*, edited by Salim Tamari, director of the Institute of Jerusalem Studies. It has just been published here by the Institute of Jerusalem Studies (Jerusalem fax 972-2-5828901) and Badi Resource Centre for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights (Bethlehem, fax 2747346). This book reflects the Palestinians' insistence on documenting the realities, rather than the romanticism, of their own traumatic recent history and its interaction with Zionism before 1948.

With the exception of Beit Safafa and Abu Ghosh villages, the book shows, "the Israeli military forces managed to accomplish a total transfer of the Arab Palestinian population from the western suburbs and villages [of Jerusalem] to the other side of the borders."

The book attempts "to provide a reconstruction of this process of displacement and expulsion and to account for the fate of Arab

View from the Fourth Circle



Rami G. Khouri

Palestinians who lost not only their property and homes, but also a whole world that exemplified Jerusalem and Palestine before 1948."

The book also seeks to recreate pre-1948 Jerusalem without the mystification of "ideological claims put forth by Israelis, Palestinians and the world community... a city of considerable social mobility, of ethnic diversity, and of communal conflict that is tempered by a fair amount of mutual dependence and local solidarities."

Tamari says in his introduction: "While Arab secular historians tend to create a portrait of exaggerated harmony between Arabs and Jews for the pre-1948 period, Zionist historiography tends to suggest that the conflict is perennial and that Jews, at best, were accorded the status of a protected

('dhimmi') community under Ottoman and other Islamic rulers. Quotidian relations at the turn of the century between the two communities, collected from contemporary testimonials and named here, conform to neither version."

Kosovo and Jerusalem remind Arabs and Israelis that we do not agree on the facts of what happened in Palestine in the first half of this century, especially in 1947-48. Kosovo and Jerusalem also remind us that we urgently need to seek the verifiable facts of our shared and violent history — if we wish to avoid transforming the episodic Arab-Israeli clashes of this century into a trans-millennial, Balkan-like moral wasteland of perpetual fear and death.

Kosovo is not only about what could have been avoided in the past; it's also about what can still be avoided in the future. It is at once a warning about what we should avoid doing to one another, and a model of what we may be destined to endure again and again at each other's hands — unless we find that middle ground where historical fact and fantasy are finally reconciled, because they made room for all the owners of this land to share it as equals, rather than to endure inequities as peculiar and victimised people who are tormented, chosen, protected, tented, camped, canonised, expelled, or ignored.

Letters to the editor

My enemy's enemy...

AS AN Arab, I find it shameful to applaud the American-led NATO bombardment of Yugoslavia as several of our writers are doing.

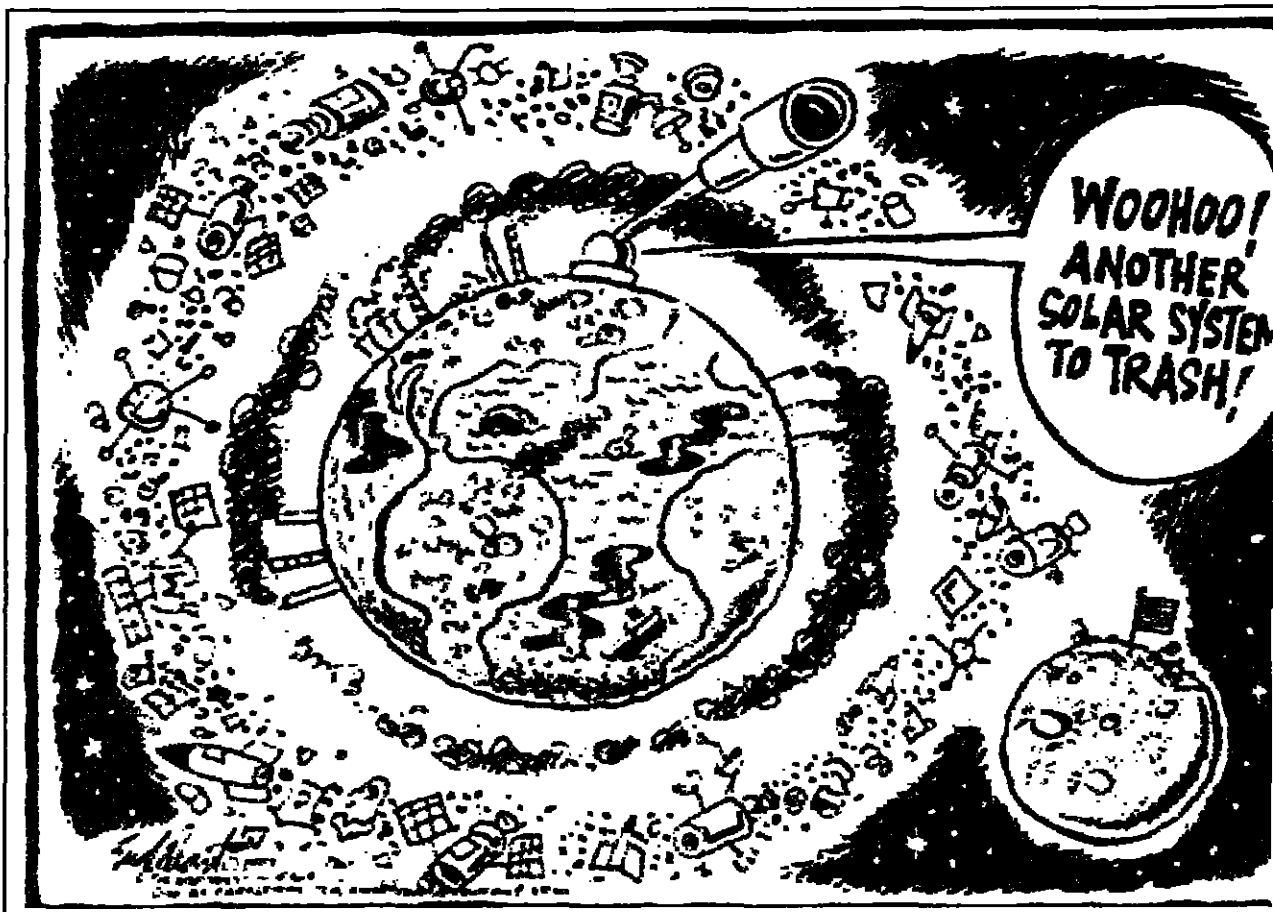
Washington has never sided with any Arab cause (they waged war against Iraq to safeguard their interests in the Gulf and not for the sake of Kuwaitis).

On the contrary they have always sided with Israel against us. I am appalled by the naïveté of some of our writers in siding with the U.S. policy, since when did the U.S. policy take any notice of the plight of Arabs and Muslims. Is it by starving the Iraqis or the embargoes against Libya and Sudan, or the continuous support to Israel in money or weapons that are killing and maiming Palestinians.

It can be understood that our writers write about the Kosovars but to applaud the American-led NATO war is shameful and disgusting.

Camille Hanna
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The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any issue they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld upon request but only under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing and abridging.



Post-Westphalian Globocop: Individual rights versus state sovereignty

By Gwynne Dyer

IF YOU HAVE lived for all of your history in a world where might makes right, but you want to get to a future where there is peace and justice for all, then you probably wouldn't choose the road that runs through Kosovo. And the journey may be completely futile anyway: as the apocryphal Irishman replied when a stranger asked him the way to Ballyparadise: "If that's where you want to get to, sir, I wouldn't start from here."

Yet a future of peace and justice is where NATO is now trying to get to in Kosovo. The military campaign against the Serbian government is part of an undertaking now most of a century old in which those countries that are already democratic have increasingly become engaged in protecting the human rights of others. And if you want to call that cultural imperialism, go ahead.

The "world's most successful military alliance," as it likes to bill itself, has tactfully cancelled the 50th anniversary celebrations that were scheduled for later this month. It is, after all, fighting its first war, and one with a doubtful outcome. It is also fighting it very badly.

Even given the political constraints under which NATO's military commanders are operating, they are doing a deeply unimpressive job. If the principal means by which they plan to tackle the 300-plus Serbian tanks in Kosovo is air power (for example), then you would expect them to have lots of specialised tank-killing aircraft in the theatre of war. In fact, they have precisely fourteen A-10 aircraft in the region (with four more on the way), plus 24 Apache helicopters that might become operational by the end of the first month's fighting. Frankly, you would not have these people to organise the Teddy Bears' Picnic, let alone a major military campaign in the Balkans. But you can say this much for NATO: it is at least fighting an altruistic war, and one that may even have some bearing on whether the rule of law prevails internationally in the coming century.

If you've recovered from the apoplexy attack now, let's acknowledge at once that bombers are not the ideal implement with which to build a just and peaceful world. NATO, to some extent, is like the man who has only a hammer: everything looks like a nail. But let us also acknowledge that not just and peaceful world order can ever exist without enforcement, any more than domestic peace and justice are possible without police. The mere fact that force is being used in Kosovo does not invalidate the enterprise.

It is a curious fact that all the larger overseas interventions of the United States since the Gulf War (disregarding minor outbursts of petulance like dropping cruise missiles on an aspirin factory in Khartoum) have had humanitarian rather than "national interest" motives. Somalia, Haiti, the bombing that brought the Bosnian war to an end in 1995, and now Kosovo: this is getting to be a habit.

In every single case, whether it was the United States acting alone or in concert with NATO, there was the same absence of traditional strategic or economic motivations, the same sort of humanitarian emergency caused by

tyrants or warlords, and the same tremulous reluctance to act if Western casualties might be involved.

And in every case except Bosnia (where the legal government asked for help), the operation has meant intervening in the internal affairs of a sovereign state that was minding its own business — even if that business was genocide — and posing no active threat to its neighbours.

Since the end of the Cold War, in other words, there has been a steady erosion of the sovereign right of small and even medium-sized states to mistreat their own citizens (though big, nuclear-armed states can obviously do whatever they want to their citizens and minorities).

This frontal attack on sovereignty is being led by the United States, the most conservative and traditionalist of the big Western countries — which is particularly ironic because the United States government also fights ruthlessly to stymie or weaken new international institutions like the International Criminal Court that would infringe on its own absolute sovereignty. There is plenty of hypocrisy about this issue, but despite all the paradoxes and contradictions, there may be something very important going on here.

Zoom all the way out and consider the very big picture. The dominant political trend of the past two centuries, infecting first the West and then the rest of the planet, has been the spread of democracy. It is virtually irresistible because it is driven by the interaction between human nature and the technology of mass communications, rather than by some specific set of cultural beliefs.

Nationalism is the flip side of democracy. When democratic revolutions destroy the old hierarchies and loyalties, there is always an urgent need for some new focus of loyalty and identity. The quick and dirty fix, in most cases, has been ethnicity — and so the wars that broke up the empires and redefined borders in terms of ethnic nationalisms spread first across Europe, and then the rest of the world.

They were particularly savage wars, because the only kind of wars that democracies fight well are total wars. It is, paradoxically, much easier to mobilise popular support for some allegedly high cause where "vital interests" or even national survival is at stake than for some more limited goal, so the wars of nationalism were fought with no holds barred. By 1945, with the aid of modern science and technology, they had produced both nuclear weapons and extermination camps.

The survivors of the World War II were very frightened people: they had stared into the Pit, and it was filled with tens of millions of dead. So right after the war they created new global rules that we all still live by. They were, of course, utterly contradictory. To prevent new wars they created the United Nations, whose primary rule was that no country may ever change its borders by force, or even intervene in the internal affairs of another. Like the League of Nations before it, the U.N. is really built on the foundations of the Treaty of Westphalia, which in 1648 ended a century of religious wars in Europe by recognising the absolute sovereignty of every existing state.

The Treaty of Westphalia did not outlaw wars and

forced border changes, because it was still dealing with a Europe of absolute monarchies. So long as religion was left out of it and popular passions were not aroused, limited wars for colonies and bits of border territory were manageable (and potentially quite profitable). The 1945 settlement, in that context, is "Westphalia plus": international war itself becomes illegal — except in defence of the borders as they existed at the time of the U.N. Charter was signed, in which case collective military action becomes an international obligation.

During the long Cold War between the West and the Soviet bloc that followed, the U.N. was widely regarded as a failed organisation, but "Westphalia plus" really worked. Empires have been dismantled and federations have broken up, but far fewer international borders have been changed by force since 1945 than in any other half-century of recent history.

But the price of this settlement was high. Absolute sovereignty means that every government can do whatever it likes to its own citizens with absolute impunity. It is a tyrant's charter, and from Cambodia in "Year Zero" to Rwanda in 1994 it is ordinary people who have paid the price. Their only hope of assistance from outside — a pretty flimsy one, most of the time — has been the International Declaration of Human Rights.

This document, passed by the U.N. in 1948 and ratified by almost every country in the world, addressed the other, equally horrifying legacy of total war: not the nuclear weapons, but the death camps. In direct, but unacknowledged, contradiction to the U.N. Charter it implies that the old doctrine that the internal affairs of states were inviolate died with the Holocaust. Henceforth, the basic human rights that are enshrined in the Universal Declaration must be respected by all governments everywhere, regardless of ideology or circumstances.

The declaration was reinforced by the U.N. Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, also signed in 1948, but there was no enforcement mechanism. Unless all the great powers on the Security Council could agree (which they very rarely could, given their mutual rivalries and fears), nothing much could be done by outsiders even about the most dreadful human rights abuses taking place within the borders of a sovereign state.

There were occasional and partial exceptions, like the international sanctions against apartheid in South Africa, but by and large sovereignty trumped human rights. In a world living under the shadow of global nuclear war, you can even understand why: nothing was worth risking that.

By the same token, however, a world released from the imminent threat of nuclear war was bound to start paying more attention to the other part of the post-1945 settlement — especially because, in the meantime, changes in media technology had begun to bring the atrocities committed on the other side of the planet right into people's homes. "World public opinion" is no longer an empty phrase, and it does have a large moral dimension.

It is at this point, therefore, that the intense contradiction between absolute sovereignty and universal human rights

moves to centre-stage. The hit-and-miss humanitarian interventions of the early post-Cold War years — "Haiti's easy, let's do that," "Pass on Rwanda, it's just too far" — didn't tread on the toes of anybody important, so they passed without too much comment. But in the Balkans, we have hit the jackpot.

Why the Balkans? One reason, as German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer put it, is that "this absurd war of Europe's old plagues of fascist nationalism and racism has gone on for 10 years already." The rest of the West finally got so fed up with Serbian behaviour that something just snapped. But we should not underestimate the impact of the specific images of ethnic cleansing in Kosovo: one of Milosevic's great mistakes has been his failure to realise that every country in the West is haunted by memories and images of the World War II.

So Yugoslavia's sacred sovereignty becomes less important than human rights in Kosovo, and the can of worms is finally opened. This time Russia sees worrying parallels with its own treatment of minorities in places like Chechnya, and China understands all too clearly that what applies to Kosovo could also apply to Tibet and Xinjiang if it had to use overt violence to retain control there. Many smaller countries around the planet also feel distinctly uneasy, because almost everybody has minorities of one sort or another.

It is going to be a wild ride: nobody knows where the war in Kosovo will end up, or what outside alliances will form around the struggle. It's doubtful that people like President Bill Clinton even fully understand that by this action they are making a historic shift from the well-worn track of the U.N. and sovereignty to a human rights and international law track that is still in the process of being laid. But it is part of a broader shift that is already well underway.

Since the middle of the '90s we have seen the creation of the first two ad hoc tribunals on war crimes since Nuremberg, to deal with the genocides in Bosnia and Rwanda. That was followed by the creation last year of an International Criminal Court which is meant to institutionalise the whole process. More recently, we have had the astonishing sight of a former head of state, General Augusto Pinochet, arrested in a friendly country for human rights violations committed within his own country, Chile. The net of international law is getting a bit more real.

Last year at the ICC negotiations in Rome, British Foreign Office Minister Tony Lloyd spoke movingly of the need to end "the grotesque parody whereby the killer of one person is more likely to be brought to justice than the killer of thousands." Whether that sort of change comes fast or slowly now depends on an alarming extent on what happens in Kosovo.

The writer is a London-based independent journalist whose articles are published in 45 countries

A reporter's broken promise angers profession

By Douglas Frantz

FACED WITH a long prison term and financial ruin, Michael Gallagher did what criminals routinely do in such circumstances: He cut a deal with prosecutors, swapping incriminating information against someone else for leniency and a lighter sentence.

But Gallagher was not just another white-collar miscreant or small-time hoodlum. He was an investigative reporter who had worked for Cincinnati's dominant newspaper, The Cincinnati Enquirer. His decision to reveal the name of a confidential source, along with notes, documents and secretly taped conversations, is echoing through the legal and journalistic communities as a major assault on the revered principle of protecting sources. And the case is raising questions about the legal rights of sources who are burned by journalists.

Most legal precedents on this subject involve efforts to protect confidential sources in the face of attempts by prosecutors or others to force disclosure of their names. Indeed, it is something of a badge of honour among journalists to go to jail — or promise to — rather than identify a source.

Gallagher had promised his source, George F. Ventura, a former lawyer for Chiquita Brands International, that he would go to jail rather than reveal that Mr. Ventura helped him gain access to Chiquita's voice-mail

system, according to evidence disclosed last week. But in the end, Gallagher struck a deal with prosecutors and identified Ventura. Now it is Ventura who faces the prospect of going to jail. He is charged with unauthorized access to a computer and violations of Ohio's electronic communication privacy law. If convicted, he could be sentenced to as much as 12 years in prison.

Bill Kovach, the curator of the Nieman Foundation at Harvard University, said Gallagher's actions were unfortunate for all journalists. "In throwing over a source, he has given up the right to ever claim to be a journalist," Kovach said. "His integrity was on the line and he surrendered it. It hurts the stature of journalism all around to have someone behave publicly the way Gallagher has behaved."

That view was echoed by Jane Kirtley, the executive director of the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press. "I've dealt with reporters who would — and do — go to jail to protect sources, so this is a very painful case," Kirtley said. "It smacks of saving your own hide by letting your source take the consequences."

The rationale for protecting sources is straightforward: Often the only way to obtain information about criminal wrongdoing, corporate mismanagement or public corruption is by promising anonymity to someone who has information about those matters.

'In throwing over a source, he has given up the right to ever claim to be a journalist... It hurts the stature of journalism all around'

In an affidavit filed in the Cincinnati case, Sandra Davidson, a journalism professor at the University of Missouri, said if a reporter does not keep a promise of confidentiality, sources will dry up and so will the flow of information. "That chilling effect, however, will not stop at that particular journalist, but will also affect the ability of the journalist's colleagues to gather information," she said. "If the sources of information dry up, then the functioning of the whole system collapses."

The initial contact between the Enquirer and Ventura had come in early October of 1997, several months after Gallagher and another reporter, Cameron McWhirter, had begun work

on the Chiquita project. Ventura, who had left Chiquita a year earlier, sent an e-mail message to McWhirter offering to help with the story, according to testimony and statements in court by Daniel Breyer, a special prosecutor for Hamilton County, Ohio.

A short time later, in a taped telephone conversation with McWhirter, Ventura said: "You've got to have someone run through those voice mails," according to Breyer. In the same conversation Ventura provided secret access codes for the voice mails of at least two Chiquita lawyers, the prosecutor said.

Last May, the Enquirer published an 18-page special section challenging the business practices of Chiquita, the huge banana company based in Cincinnati. But less than two months later the newspaper, owned by the Gannett Company, published a front-page apology, agreed to pay Chiquita more than \$10 million and fired Gallagher, its star investigative reporter, saying he had misled his editors.

By mid-September, Gallagher had reached a bargain with the special prosecutor in which he pleaded guilty to two felonies, carrying a total sentence of up to two years in prison. To avoid more extensive charges, he told prosecutors that Ventura had provided him with access codes to the Chiquita voice-mail system and agreed to testify against his former source.

McWhirter, who has never identi-

fied Ventura or anyone else as a source, testified that in October 1997 he had passed the voice-mail access codes on to Gallagher, who quickly used them to gain access to the voice-mail system 15 to 20 times before being informed by his editors and lawyers for the newspaper that what he was doing was probably illegal. But Gallagher continued to tap into the voice-mail system without his editors' knowledge, according to his testimony last week. Gallagher said he believed protecting the identity of a source is "one of the highest responsibilities a journalist has." He offered no explanation for disclosing Ventura's assistance.

Like many confidential sources, Ventura was a disgruntled former employee. In an interview last week, he said he had been angered by Chiquita's treatment of some of its employees while he was working for the company in Honduras, and that he had quit partly in protest. But it was also disclosed in court by Breyer that Ventura had demanded \$1.5 million from Chiquita, and had threatened to file a discrimination complaint and go to the press.

As a result, Breyer said, Ventura was suspected of being a source for the articles even before Gallagher revealed his identity. Nonetheless, Ventura was not indicted until after the reporter agreed to cooperate and confirmed Ventura's role to prosecutors.

In defending himself against the 10-count indictment returned by a county grand jury last September, Ventura has taken the unusual step of invoking Ohio's shield law. He claims that the protection afforded journalists who refuse to reveal sources should also apply to the sources. The judge in the case, Ann Marie Tracey, has not yet ruled on the shield law question. It is an issue for which there are few legal precedents and little agreement among journalists.

"The law must not only shield the journalist from having to reveal his or her source," said Professor Davidson, "but the law must also shield the source from having his or her identity revealed by the journalist."

But Kirtley sees a danger in extending the protections. "Allowing a source to use the shield law as a sword to control the reporter would signal yet another attempt to erode the intent of shield laws, which is to protect a journalist," she said.

As for Gallagher, he faces sentencing after Ventura's trial, which has been put off for several months. Gallagher also faces a civil suit brought by Chiquita. And, judging from the questions asked in court last week by Ventura's lawyer, Marc Mezibov, both Gallagher and the Enquirer face the likelihood of a civil suit by Ventura for breach of contract in divulging his identity.

— The New York Times

to the editor
my's enemy...

sovereignty



A lone female Glossy Black-Cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus lathami halmaturinus*) rests on a eucalyptus tree at Stokes Bay on Kangaroo Island, where a small and isolated pocket of the rare birds is threatened with extinction. Sydney's Taronga Zoo announced yesterday that there are now fewer than 100 of the birds left on Kangaroo Island and their numbers are on the decline (AFP photo)

Environmental prizes awarded to activists on six continents

Agence France Presse

TWO ABORIGINAL women, a Cameroon lawyer and a Karen from Myanmar are among seven activists who have been awarded the Goldman Environmental Prize, officials announced here Monday.

The seven environmentalists will receive the prestigious Goldman prize at a ceremony in San Francisco, as well as \$125,000 each from the Goldman Environmental Foundation.

A total of \$750,000 is given annually to grassroots environmentalists from each of the six continental regions, making it the world's largest award for environmental activists.

Ka Hsaw Wa, 28, co-founder of EarthRights International, has spent much of the past decade

interviewing victims of reported human rights and environmental abuses carried out by Myanmar's ruling military regime.

"He has documented thousands of cases of forced labour, execution, rape and confiscation of property carried out by the military in support of a pipeline project by a consortium including U.S.-based UNOCAL and Total, the French petroleum company," the jury said. Myanmar, also known as Burma, and the companies involved have denied the allegations.

In Australia, Jacqui Katona, 33, and Yvonne Margarula, 41 — two Aboriginal women — led a national campaign to prevent mining of Jabluka, one of the world's largest uranium deposits, which lies next to native lands and the country's largest national park.

Canada's Bernard Martin, 45, won an award for working to protect the earth's over-burdened oceans.

A fourth generation fisherman, he called for fishing quotas after watching the Grand Banks cod fishery decline.

His call was not heeded and in 1992, the fishery was closed, forcing 30,000 Newfoundlanders, including himself, out of work.

He created FORCE: Fishers Organised for the Revitalisation of Communities and Ecosystems, to prevent the same thing happening again.

Honduran Jorge Varela, 51, won an award for promoting a model of shrimp farming that respects fragile resources in the Gulf of Fonseca where commercial shrimp farmers had cleared mangrove forests,

poisoned estuaries and hurt fishing grounds.

In Cameroon, lawyer Samuel Nguiffo, 33, struggled to stop the liquidation of the world's second largest contiguous rainforest. He informed forest-dwellers, including Pygmies, of their legal right to manage their traditional lands.

He is also at the forefront of an international effort to ensure that the Chad-Cameroon oil pipeline project does not bring about large-scale forest destruction, marine pollution and social upheaval.

Slovakia's Michael Kravcik, 43, a hydrologist, succeeded in galvanising a community to stop a proposed large dam that would have harmed the environment. They mobilised in support of smaller, less destructive dams and restored agricultural lands.

Environmental row over U.S. military exercises

By Aldwin R. Fajardo
Agence France Presse

WHEN THE Chamorro people of the Northern Mariana Islands first voted to become a U.S. Commonwealth almost two decades ago, environmental protection was among the least of their concerns.

Now, thanks to the United States military, the environment has become a major issue.

Officials in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) are clamouring for an extensive environmental assessment off Farallon de Medinilla, an active volcanic island north of Saipan, following U.S. military bombing exercises feared to have caused serious destruction to the uninhabited islet's surrounding reef.

"I think it is appropriate that we should look into it and determine once and for all if the exercises are really damaging the reef and endangering some of the marine life there," said Governor Pedro Tenorio, who is

pushing for an inquiry into possible damage to the reef. Despite previous assurances by Rear Admiral Martyn Janczak, former commander of the U.S. Naval Forces-Marianas, that the Navy was taking precautionary measures to prevent damaging the islet and surrounding reef, CNMI officials remain unconvinced.

House natural resources committee chairman, Manuel Tenorio, is lobbying for a more comprehensive survey of Farallon de Medinilla to determine whether CNMI should ask the U.S. Defence Department to stop military exercises in the area.

CNMI officials also want local participation in a new damage assessment.

Farallon de Medinilla is one of the Western Pacific's biggest depositories of coral reef.

The lease agreement for Farallon de Medinilla, under the covenant between the U.S. and CNMI, guarantees the U.S. Defence Department will be responsible for whatever happens to the island. It is required to

restore and rehabilitate the island which has been used for bombing and target practice by the U.S. military mostly when conflicts arise in neighbouring Asian countries and the Persian Gulf. Unconfirmed reports here say the navy is again conducting exercises in Farallon de Medinilla since hostilities in Kosovo started up.

The destruction of marine resources and fisheries around Farallon de Medinilla from U.S. bombing exercises has previously been identified as an issue that should be discussed with federal officials.

But U.S. officials say the CNMI's comments on environmental issues should be brought to the attention of the U.S. Naval Forces-Marianas Command which stubbornly insists the islet sustained minimal damage, if anything.

This prompted the CNMI government to propose the inclusion of marine resources in round-table negotiations between local and federal government officials under the covenant.

But White House negotiator Edward Cohen told Commonwealth officials that discussions on the military land use issues should be held directly with the Defence Department.

The U.S.-CNMI Covenant, reached between the two governments in the late 1970s, remains a major reason behind the Commonwealth's apprehension in seeking to regain control over the Farallon de Medinilla, irrespective of environmental concerns.

Tenorio said the agreement established mutual respect between the Northern Mariana Islands and the U.S. Congress and stood to be complied with.

A section of the Covenant says that if the U.S. determines that it no longer needs the leased military lands, the Commonwealth can buy the leases back.

But with the worsening hostilities in Kosovo and the still unresolved conflict in Iraq, many believe a lease-back remains remote.

Thousands of turtles abandon Indian beach

Normally, a beach in eastern India is filled each winter with thousands of nesting Olive Ridley sea turtles. But, the endangered turtles haven't arrived for the past two winters, prompting fears for their future.

By Ranjita Biswas

EVERY YEAR as winter sets in, hundreds of thousands of Olive Ridley sea turtles come in wave after wave from the sea to the warm sands of Gahirmatha beach in Orissa, eastern India.

That is, until the past two years. Researchers from India's forest department and the Wildlife Institute of India are alarmed that the Olive Ridelies have not shown up for a second winter.

Turtle expert Chandra Sekhar Kar does not rule out the possibility that

they have found a new place to nest. Some have recently appeared on two offshore islands.

Olive Ridelies are extremely sensitive to change in the environment, and over-development has been known to make the creature move to more conducive regions. Scientists point out that it also happened in the case of sea turtles in Mexico, loggerhead turtles in Turkey and green turtles in the Mediterranean Sea.

The enigmatic Olive Ridelies are among the smallest sea turtles and an endangered species. They have a unique habit of mass nesting: they mate in the sea off tropical beaches and emerge in wave upon wave at night to nest. By morning, they go back to the sea after covering the eggs with sand for the incubation period of 46 to 71 days. Meanwhile, another batch turns up.

Roughly half of the two to three million existing Olive Ridelies usually nest at the 10-kilometre stretch at Gahirmatha, making it the biggest rookery in the world.

Filmmaker Sekhar Dattari, who documented the unique event, calls it "one of the few surviving natural spectacles in the world."

Gahirmatha Beach was little known until a U.N. team came across the turtles' paradise in the mid-1970s.

For years, environmentalists have complained that the turtle is in danger from humans. Mechanised fishing trawlers with wide nets are a major culprit. In 1983, carcasses of 3,000 Olives, believed to be victims of trawlers, washed up at the beach.

Rather than releasing the turtles by cutting the net, the fishermen either break their back or slit their throats.

Under pressure from conservationists, the government ordered the trawler owners to attach a turtle extruder device to the nets.

But many balk at investing in the device, which costs 5,000 rupees, and the turtles continue to die. Last November, 26 bodies washed up, followed by 652 in December, and 4,682 in January, at the height of the nesting season.

On land, humans steal the eggs and kill the turtles for their meat, which is considered a delicacy. Smuggling is common in the nearby state of West Bengal and across the international border of Bangladesh. Local newspapers often report on border police stumbling into truckloads of turtles (including banned land species).

Kar records that till 1980-81, some 80,000 pregnant females were regu-

larly captured in a single season. The failure of Ridelies to turn up for nesting in 1982 is said to be a result of this. They also did not appear in 1988, but experts say it is unusual that the turtles have not nested for two consecutive years.

Hatchlings return to the sea by instinctively moving toward the light of the moon. However, bright lights of the fishing jetties and a nearby township disorient the hatchlings, leading to a high mortality rate, says B. C. Chowdhury, an expert with the Wildlife Institute of India.

He suggests raising a fence near the beach of Rushikulya rookery, where lights disturb the hatchlings, and planting casuarina trees 100 to 150 metres from the high-tide line to provide adequate nesting habitat. Chowdhury believes an annual

census of Olive Ridelies, like India's regular task of counting tigers, should be launched at Gahirmatha.

Experts say that if the trend of 15,000 mortalities a year continues, the Olive Ridley may not survive after 25 years.

However, measures to protect the animal have been perfunctory. In 1977, Orissa state listed the Ridley as an endangered species. In 1982, at the behest of environmentalists, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi launched a sea turtle conservation drive.

Last year, the Indian environment ministry promised to launch Project Sea Turtle, which would include measures like patrolling the coast and enforcing the extruder requirement. To date nothing has happened.

— Gemini News

Asian Development Bank sees world economy posting sluggish growth in '99

MANILA (AFP) — World economic growth will remain sluggish this year after posting a steep drop in 1998, with developing nations forecast to pick up and industrialised ones to slow, according to the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

"World output growth fell sharply in 1998 from a strong 4.2 per cent in 1997 to 2.2 per cent," Jungsoo Lee, the Manila-based bank's chief economist, said in a statement accompanying the ADB's Annual Development Outlook report.

In 1999, we expect world output growth to be about the same as last year.

While many developing nations' economies will start to pick up, the North American and European economies will begin to slow down," he added.

Last year's slowdown could be traced to several causes such as the Asian

financial crisis which damaged many developing countries and the deepening recession in Japan, according to the ADB's report.

The plunge of the Russian rouble and the Brazilian real added pressure on the global economy, the ADB said.

"Spells of turmoil in Russia, Asia and Latin America reverberated throughout world trade and financial networks as international flows of private capital slowed," the report said.

Despite the "negative tone" of world markets in 1998, industrial economies, except for Japan, remained bullish.

Britain and the United States maintained growth of 2.5 and 3.9 per cent respectively while growth in the euro zone countries varied from 1.5 per cent in Italy to 3.8 per cent in Spain.

A 30 per cent drop in oil prices also benefitted industrial economies, in part compensating for the loss of export demand in crisis-hit Asia, the ADB said.

Average inflation in developed countries was limited to 1.4 per cent while the rate in developing economies rose slightly to 10.2 per cent — "which is still well below historical levels," it added.

As private lenders scrambled to lower exposure in financially crippled countries, net capital flows to developing economies plunged to only \$29 billion last year from a peak of \$177 billion in 1996.

The ADB said 1998 was "a bad year" for nearly all developing countries, with Asian developing economies slowing to their slowest growth in a decade.

Many once-robust economies in East and

South East Asia shrank, but China and other South Asian countries still managed substantial growth, the outlook said.

However, non-Asian developing economies continued to grow, although at a slower rate compared to the previous year. Middle Eastern and some Latin American countries, meanwhile, were dragged down by the fall in oil prices.

"The financial and exchange rate crisis remains the main source of uncertainty in Asia," the ADB said.

The "speed and volatility" of the Asian crisis "makes it difficult to forecast how long it will take for fresh portfolio capital and banking credit to begin flowing again to developing economies."

The danger of predicting such a recovery became apparent in August last year, when the devaluation

of the Russian rouble triggered a new round of "capital flight and stock market drops around the world," the bank said.

"Financial markets in Asia itself are not the only source of uncertainty in the region," the bank warned.

"Integrated global capital markets transmit financial contagion almost instantaneously around the world. Long distance trading relationships make the impact of a devaluation in one part of the developing world quickly felt elsewhere," it said.

It warned that financial jitters in Asia could also "prompt a slide in U.S. stock prices."

Another uncertainty spawned by the crisis is its "far-ranging political effects," the bank said, which in Indonesia's case, for instance, led to social unrest and ultimately to a change in regime.

Exchange Rates Monday, 19-04-99									
ACCESS 4444882									
CURRENCY	UNIT	JO	US	EURO	GBP	JPY	HKD	SGD	THB
JORDAN DINAR	1.0000	0.1888	0.1928	1.8777	1.8387	0.1541	0.2378	0.2077	0.1300
BAHRAIN DHR	5.2773	1.0000	1.0211	9.9476	9.7403	0.2000	0.2995	0.2600	0.1600
SAUDI RIYAL	5.1879	0.8793	1.0000	9.7414	9.5390	0.2000	0.2995	0.2600	0.1600
QATAR RIYAL	0.5325	0.1027	0.1027	1.0000	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
YEMEN RIAL	0.5430	0.1027	0.1027	1.0000	1.0000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000	0.1000
OMAN RIAL	5.1427	0.9708	0.9913	9.9555	9.4559	0.2000	0.2995	0.2600	0.1600
LIBYAN DINAR	4.0307	0.8813	0.8830	8.8087	8.7919	0.2000	0.2995	0.2600	0.1600
EGYPT POUND	4.8136	0.9087	0.9279	9.0386	8.8528	0.2000	0.2995	0.2600	0.1600
LIBYAN LIRA	21.2147	4.0046	4.0853	39.8356	39.2079	0.2000	0.2995	0.2600	0.1600
IRAN RIAL	1.4124	0.2888	0.2723	2.8572	2.8571	0.2000	0.2995	0.2600	0.1600
INDONESIAN RUP	0.8731	0.1648	0.1683	1.6394	1.6394	0.2000	0.2995	0.2600	0.1600
GERMAN MARK	2.5036	0.4895	0.4999	4.8752	4.7852	0.2000	0.2995	0.2600	0.1600
FRANCE FRANC	1.2146	0.4011	0.4055	4.0554	3.9955	0.2000	0.2995	0.2600	0.1600
NETHERLAND FL	0.6984	0.1340	0.1371	1.3714	1.3334	0.2000	0.2995	0.2600	0.1600
ITALY LIRA	1.9368	0.3147	0.3213	3.1301	3.0651	0.2000	0.2995	0.2600	0.1600
SPAIN PTA	2.9223	0.5517	0.5633	5.6373	5.3733	0.2000	0.2995	0.2600	0.1600
SWEDEN KORUNA	11.7874	2.2252	2.2721	22.1337	21.6738	0.2000	0.2995	0.2600	0.1600
FINLAND MARKKA	20.4788	4.8471	4.9494	48.2143	47.2126	0.2000	0.2995	0.2600	0.1600
NEW ZEALAND D	10.3587	1.9117	1.9417	19.4117	18.9417	0.2000	0.2995	0.2600	0.1600
AUSTRALIA DOLLA	2.1666	0.4090	0.4178	4.1788	4.0900	0.2000	0.2995	0.2600	0.1600
NEW ZEALAND D	4.3113	0.8189	0.8310	8.3100	8.0900	0.2000	0.2995	0.2600	0.1600
INDONESIAN RUP	0.7585	0.1432	0.1462	1.4621	1.3946	0.2000	0.2995	0.2600	0.1600
NETHERLAND FL	18.2458	3.4445	3.5172	34.5172	33.5507	0.2000	0.2995	0.2600	0.1600
GERMAN MARK	2.0915	0.3948	0.4032	4.0323	3.9457	0.2000	0.2995	0.2600	0.1600
FRANCE FRANC	1.3251	0.2501	0.2554	2.5542	2.4355	0.2000	0.2995	0.2600	0.1600

More Libya dinar devaluations likely — minister

GENEVA (R) — The Libyan dinar is still overvalued and further devaluations are likely on the road to a unified exchange rate, Libyan Economy and Commerce Minister Abdul Hafiz Zleini said on Monday.

"We all agree that the Libyan dinar is overvalued and there is a lot more to do," Zleini told Reuters in an interview. "We have a long term policy not to borrow and incur no long-term debts, which is one of the reasons for the strength of the dinar."

This policy had put pressure on the central bank, already squeezed by low oil export receipts last year, as it sought to satisfy domestic demand for hard currency, he said.

Zleini, in Geneva for an oil and gas investments conference, said he expected further devaluations of the dinar, which was devalued by 18 per cent in December last year. The Libyan authorities are trying to squeeze liquidity out of the unofficial currency market, which the International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimates

accounts for 20 per cent of all transactions in Libya. He gave no time frame.

Zleini said the government was trying to ease demand for dollars on the parallel market by selling dollars and realigning the official rate, which stands at 0.43 dinar to the dollar since the latest devaluation.

"The demand for dollars forced us into what we call deficit budgets but now we are curtailing government spending on what we call non-productive sectors," Zleini said, referring to a recent budget

squeeze in a new austerity budget for 1999.

Libya's fiscal authorities said oil earnings fell by 35 per cent in 1998 when world prices slumped to a 22-year low.

In addition, seven years of U.N. sanctions, suspended earlier this month, have cost Libya \$24 billion since 1992, when the world body ordered a series of economic sanctions including an air ban on Libya over the 1988 Lockerbie airline bombing. Zleini said that in order to reduce demand for black market dollars, the central bank had recently started selling dollars and pushed the unofficial rate down to 1.50 dinars from 3.20 to the dollar.

move towards a unified Libyan dinar exchange rate because of the disparity between the unofficial and official rates.

Gartis Idradi, senior economist at the IMF's Middle Eastern Department, added that the Libyan central bank's policy so far had not succeeded in bridging the gap and a unified currency could not be achieved at a reasonable level when the unofficial rate was 3.4 times the official rate.

General Manager Position

A newly established company in Jordan is seeking to employ a suitably qualified and experienced person for the subject position, with the following stipulations and requirements:-

1. Bsc Graduate (as a minimum) in the fields of Marketing or Business Administration with fluency in the Arabic and English languages.
2. Minimum 15 years experience with at least the last five years in senior administration and management positions.
3. Work experience in the field of data processing and personnel employment and administration would be an asset.
4. Employment would be based upon an annual contract, renewable with the consent of both parties.

Letter of application including CV with references by 30 April, 1999 at the latest to:-
P.O.Box 940968 Amman 11194 Jordan

Iraq expects low agriculture harvest this year

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraqi officials say U.N. trade sanctions have crippled Iraq's agriculture and they are pessimistic about this year's harvest as a result of the spread of pests.

They said lack of fertilisers, agricultural machinery, seed and weedkillers and the means of spraying them prevented Iraq from growing the food it needed to feed its nearly 22 million people.

"We are expecting a decrease in agriculture's yield this year that could reach up to 80 per cent," an

Iraqi agriculture ministry official was quoted as saying in an interview published this week.

He said the ministry was not able to combat weeds and pests such as sunpest, dubs, humaira, corn stem borer, red spider mite and desert locust which had been infecting crops since last year.

Iraq said the main cause for its deteriorating agricultural yield was its inability to use its fleet of 28 helicopters for spraying insecticides

(Continued on page 9)



Barring Medical Conference

FROM 12 till 24th of April Le Meridien hotel will host two groups of 100 Dutch family physicians and medical specialists coming from a Dutch province called BRABANT. The conference is called the Barring Medical Conference and in their yearly get-together the participants concentrate on a subject to improve the cooperation between medical workers. Because of the multicultural society of Holland and subject this year is concentrated on "Crossing Borders." By means of group discussions, workshops and group-sessions the participants are looking at various cultural, social and ethical subjects related to the medical science and the problems concentrating on crossing this century to the Millennium. Apart from their busy work the participants will of course enjoy visits to the archaeological and cultural sites of Jordan.

THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

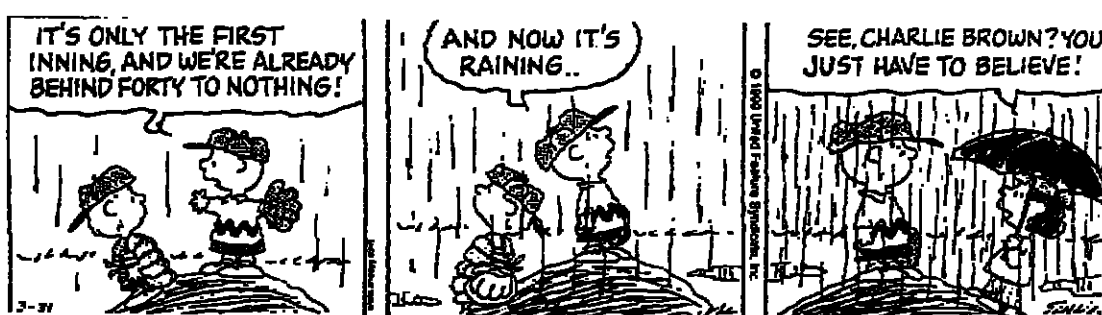
ACROSS

1. Comprehensive
8. "Butterfield 8" co-elder Dina
15. Put on a revival
16. Neighbor of Iran
17. In general
18. Hodge a cudgel
19. Small crown
20. Ccasek of The Cars
21. Trent of the Senete
22. Crosby film, "Holiday"
23. Sea north of Norway
27. Waxy, pret.
28. King's daughter?
30. Memorable period
31. Pluck
32. Told whoppers
34. Neighbor of Santa Barbara
37. Knight's title
38. Other Sp.
40. Metal projectile
43. Sleeveless garments
46. Mom-&-pop store grp.
47. Enigma
52. German article
53. Google and File
54. "Just the Way You"
55. Blind element
57. Gerundial ending
58. Substandard urban housing
60. Fit to market
62. Honeybunch
64. Lasis
65. John Singer or Dick
66. Dynamo pivots
67. Colorful marine fishes

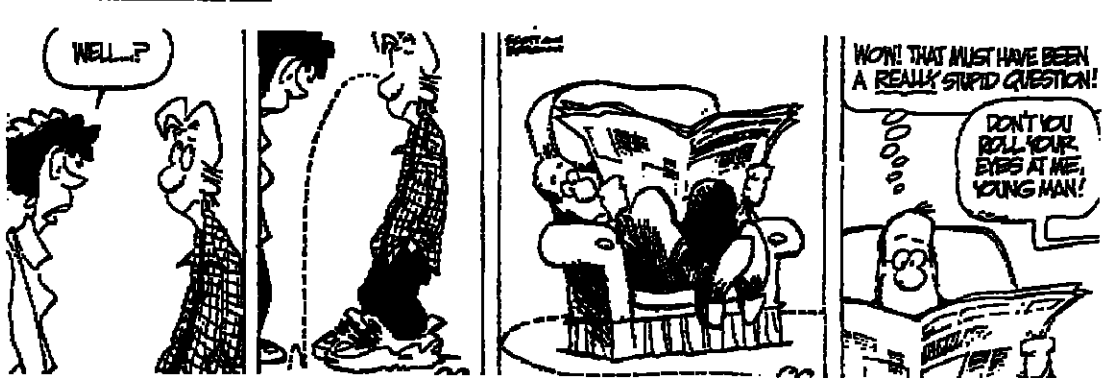
DOWN

1. Potatoes au
2. Eye lining
3. Diagonally
4. Lead player
5. Moral story
6. Atwood story, "Bluebeard's"
7. Balmoral
8. Castle's river
9. Dolphin quarterback
10. Ramrod straight
11. Lively dance
12. Unincorporated
13. Garbage dropper
14. 1954. Petri film
15. Admitting
24. Vendetta
25. Guns fit in
26. Salton or Caspian
29. Indigo plant
30. Santa CA
34. Precooled excessively
35. Exultantly joyful
36. "The Four Seasons" star
38. Russo of "Tin Cup"
41. Tidal flow
42. Film preview
44. Farm pen
45. Roman taken
48. "Gunsmoke" star
49. Fries lightly
50. Weasel with a black-tipped tail
51. Changes the timer
56. Showing strain
59. Lower appendages
61. Sister's sis
62. Opposite of NINE
63. Open hostilities

Peanuts



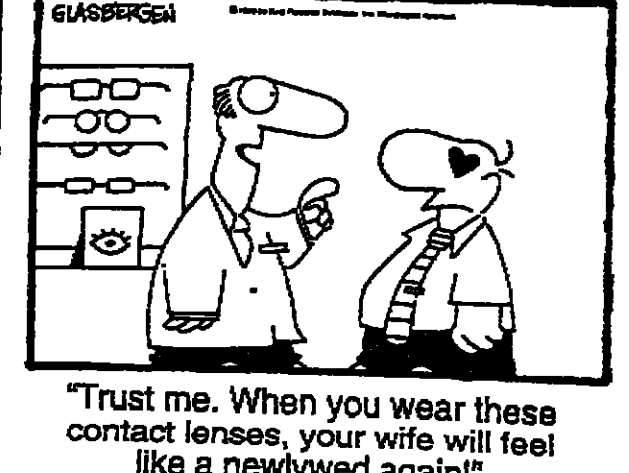
Zits



Mutt'n' Jeff



THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

GOUBS

POSOW

CHELEK

TEEBEL

Print answer here: _____

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

YOU MIGHT SAY EVERY SELF-EMPLOYED PERSON IS THIS.

Print answer here: _____

Yesterday's JUMBLE Answer: KNOWN. Tomorrow's JUMBLE Answer: TALKING ABOUT IT.

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

International Tobacco and Cigarettes Company boasts agreement with Philip Morris

THE INTERNATIONAL Tobacco and Cigarettes Company achieved remarkable results last year as it boosted sales from around JD39.9 million in 1997 to about JD45.6 million in 1998 and recorded a JD4.9 million gross profit compared to JD3.1 million in 1997. "The results during the first four months of this year (1999) are exceptional," Board Chairman Tawfiq Fakhouri told the general assembly after announcing that the net profit for 1998 amounted to JD2.5 million compared to JD1.67 million posted in 1997.

The financial results were not the only accomplishments of the company last year because Fakhouri highlighted as "an extremely important achievement," the agreement that the company was able to sign with Philip Morris, the largest cigarette firm in the world which produces many brands most importantly Marlboro, L and M, Merit and Philip Morris.

"According to this agreement which was executed right away, the company put the L and M cigarette on the Jordanian market on Nov. 19, 1998," the chairman said noting that this brand is the second largest selling cigarette in the world. He added that under the agreement more Philip Morris brands will be put on the market at a later stage.

Fakhouri told the shareholders that exports in 1998 were four times higher than the volume reached in 1997 but he stressed that the company has exerted major efforts to expand and diversify export markets in order to avoid the risk of depending on one

market for exports. "The results of these efforts will be witnessed shortly through widening the company's operations to export markets where the size of the population at the first stage exceed 100 million persons," he said.

The chairman divided the local market into two parts and said that the company succeeded in capturing about 85 per cent of the first part which Fakhouri estimated it to be around 40 per cent of the local market. According to the board chairman, smokers in the first part are those who smoke local brands of cigarettes while the remaining 60 per cent of the second part represent those who prefer to smoke foreign brands whether manufactured locally or imported.

"As our share in the second part of the market does not correspond with what the company deserves, our efforts will be intensified in the coming stage to capture a fair share of this part through selling Philip Morris brands as well as other new brands," Fakhouri said.

He indicated that in order to reduce financing costs, the company issued bonds worth JD3.5 million for private subscription. The bonds were easily and fully covered, he said noting that the bonds have eased the pressure on the company's liquidity as a result of operational expansion. The general assembly concluded its meeting by approving the distribution of cash dividends at a rate of 20 per cent. (Al Aswaq + Al Arab Al Yawm + Al Ra'i + Al Dustour).

Negotiations resume on privatising Aqaba Railway Corporation

By Ghadeer Taher

AMMAN — The government and an American-led consortium on Monday resumed negotiations on a concession for the Aqaba Railway Corporation (ARC) — a signal that privatisation of the indebted company may be back on track.

Negotiations between the government and Raytheon, an American defence and engineering giant, working with another American firm Wisconsin Central, Mitsubishi of Japan, CCC contractors of Greece, as well as the Amman-based Kawar group, are "progressing well," said an official source.

"Our negotiations made progress today, but we still have issues to iron out, both parties are determined to see that this project is executed," said the official. "We are taking into account the interest of Ma'an and its residents, and they were represented in

the negotiations today," said the official, who could not elaborate on the details as the talks are continuing. Representatives of Raytheon, which began negotiating with the government in November 1998, could not be reached for comment on Monday. Negotiations were scheduled to conclude within one month.

Privatisation of the antiquated railway has been mired in controversy from the beginning. Raytheon submitted the highest offer in an open tender process — a lump sum of JD20 million. Lawmakers and officials of the firm as well as union members said then that the government underestimated the value of the company's assets and did not receive a good offer.

This week the ARC floated a tender to evaluate the assets of the company.

The 25-year concession will include operation and maintenance of the ARC,

expanding the railway network to serve the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company (JPMC), the main customer of the railway, at the Shidiyah mine close to the Saudi Arabian border and between Aqaba and the Aqaba industrial area (Wadi II) on a build, transfer, and operate basis.

Official and industry sources estimate that the planned expansion will eventually cost between \$100-\$120 million, to be paid by the concessionaire.

The government of Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh

had all but frozen negotiations with the consortium after coming under pressure, mainly from 57 deputies demanding that negotiations be stopped for fear of massive layoffs and a social backlash.

The ARC, headquartered in Ma'an and saddled with a JD70 million debt, employs several hundred townspeople out of a total workforce of 1,300, mainly from the south.

The massive debt will be absorbed by the government. The expansion of the railway is essential if another multi-million dollar project

is to proceed. Hydro Agri Jordan, a joint venture between JPMC and Norsk Hydro, a Norwegian fertiliser giant, will need to transfer its phosphoric acid from Shidiyah to the Red Sea port of Aqaba.

The railway provides rail service from phosphate mines owned by JPMC at its southern sites of Abiad and Hassa for export through Aqaba, mainly to markets in Asia.

But Shidiyah mine is not served by rail and the service is provided by a trans-shipment facility.

Consultations continue to list Jordanian bank on Kuwaiti bourse

By Tareq Ayyoub

AMMAN — A Kuwaiti financial delegation met with Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) officials to discuss the listing of a Jordanian commercial bank on the Kuwaiti bourse, a banker said Monday.

Mohammad Asmar, general manager of the Jordan Kuwait Bank (JKB), said that no decision had been made yet about the mechanism of listing his bank on the Kuwaiti stock market adding that consultations between the Jordanian and Kuwaiti bourses are under way to reach an agreement on this issue.

Asmar said that the visit by the two-man delegation, representing a Kuwaiti financial consultancy firm, was made upon an "initiative from the Kuwaiti partners who own 53 per cent of the bank's capital."

The banker indicated that

ASE Director General Jalil Tareef was expected to make further consultations with the director of Kuwaiti bourse to iron out remaining details for listing the JKB, which has capital of JD 20 million, on the Kuwaiti financial market.

"This is the beginning not only for commercial banks in Jordan but also for insurance and industrial firms to be listed on the Kuwaiti bourse," Asmar told the Jordan Times.

"This step will open the gate for us to penetrate into other bourses in the region which will enhance our position and enable us to attract more investors," the banker said.

Currently, Kuwaiti bourse laws allow shares of foreign firms to be listed and circulated there, especially where Kuwaiti investors own equities. Many Gulf firms are listed in Kuwait.

If negotiations between

Jordanian and Kuwaiti officials succeed to list the JKB in the Gulf emirate's bourse, it will be the first Jordanian firm to win such a position.

Asmar said the JKB's role was to "submit the necessary information about the bank's current status to the concerned authorities in Kuwait to speed-up the agreement on the remaining details."

Among the issues that should be resolved before such agreement is reached is the rate of the JKB's shares that will be traded in the Kuwaiti bourse. The bank's current share price in the Amman bourse stands at JD1.610. Investors from Kuwait and other Gulf states currently hold equities in many Jordanian firms, especially in the banking and mining sectors.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, APRIL 20, 1999

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) The company you're expecting is someone you're a little tense around. Now, tension in an Aries is not a pretty sight. If you include humour in your arsenal, you're more likely to solve the problem, wind up with a fabulous party and also get your point across.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) It might feel like you're in the middle of a war zone this morning. You're a natural peacemaker, so do that. You're also the one who gets to clean up some of the messes that others create. Are you having a birthday party for 2-years-old, or what?

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You want to spend your money on a worthy cause. The problem is that you need to keep enough to cover your own expenses. Don't go on a crusade to save the homeless and then become one yourself. That would be counterproductive.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) You're strong this morning, although you may feel like you're fighting off a herd of dragons. You can ask an older person for money this afternoon. If you've done your homework, it should be pretty easy to get.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Be careful to stay on schedule. There could be detours, especially if you're travelling. Take time this morning to finish up several things that have been nagging at you. Once these are out of the way, the rest of the day will be relatively easy.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Consult with a friend first thing this morning. You'll get some excellent advice. You could also get a couple of ideas about how to save money. If you're investing money, take care. The friend who's advising you against it is probably right.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Your nerves will be on edge first thing this morning. Try to keep from getting into an argument with an older person or with your mate. You're supposed to be the peacekeeper, remember? This morning, that's going to be a real challenge.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You're running into all sorts of problems, but nothing seems to phase you. That's good, because there's a bigger problem coming up this afternoon. Somebody wants to order you around. Obviously this person doesn't realise who you are.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Pick up a manual for a technical gadget you've been trying to learn. If you take a little extra time with that today, you'll be in a stronger position later. You'll also get work done quickly so you'll have more time to play.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) The only way you'll get a mess cleaned up this morning is by getting somebody to help. There are probably several people who would love to pay back a favour you've done them. You go out of your way for other people all the time. How about letting one of them do the same back at you.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Things are breaking down about as fast as you can fix them. Instead of trying to do everything, how about sharing the load? You'll not only make your life easier, but you'll help the other person become more competent.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) It looks like you'll be accident-prone early in the day. You're most likely to get in trouble by moving too quickly and not paying attention. The resulting breakage could be rather expensive, so just settle down.

Birthstone of April: Diamond — Amethyst

Iraq expects low agriculture harvest

(Continued from page 8)

to fight pests and weeds because of western-imposed no-fly zones in north and south of the country.

These helicopters had also been grounded at a vital time by lack of spare parts, the ministry official said.

Statistics on crop production are among Iraq's closely guarded secrets. No forecast is available for this year's harvest but it is expected to be very low as there was also a shortage of rain during winter.

A recent report by the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) said Iraqi wheat production, for example, had decreased to 1.06 million tonnes in 1997 from 1.24 million tonnes in 1995.

Iraq needs three million tonnes of wheat to maintain its rationing system, which provides each person with nine kilograms of flour per month.

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UNIFIED LAND TRANS	1.130	1.090	-3.54%
UNITED FOR FINANCIAL INVS	1.070	1.070	0.00%
SERVICES INDEX	109.980	POINT	-0.51%
INDUSTRY			
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PETROLEUM REFINERY	10.700	10.620	-0.47%
WORSTED MILLS	8.150	8.150	0.00%
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL	2.370	2.380	+0.33%
CERAMICS	1.250	1.250	0.00%
TOBACCO & CIGARET	1.250	1.250	0.00%
INTL. STEEL	0.800	0.780	-2.50%
IRAFIA	0.480	0.480	-2.17%
IRAF AL DAWA	8.100	8.100	0.00%
MOULTE EAST COMPLEX	0.690	0.690	+1.86%
JO. STEEL	1.000	1.000	0.00%
ARAB ALUMINIUM	1.850	1.840	-0.54%
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	0.370	0.370	0.00%
REYMO-CHEMICAL	0.250	0.250	-2.78%
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World Youth Championship Brazil and Nigeria out; Uruguay, Japan through to semis

LAGOS (AFP) — Three-times champions Brazil and hosts Nigeria suffered surprise defeats at the World Youth Championship Sunday while Japan and Spain advanced to the semifinals in a night of upsets in the three-week tournament here.

Uruguay put out Brazil against the run of play with a penalty four minutes from time and will meet Japan Wednesday after the Asian side beat another well-fancied south American side, Mexico, to go through.

Spain meanwhile put out African champions Ghana on penalties after drawing 1-1 in full-time and will play the last African side in the tournament, Mali, Wednesday after Mali downed the hosts, Nigeria. Brazil, who had scored 12 goals in their previous three outings in the tournament, appeared set for another major goal tally when they opened the scoring after 27 minutes through Fernando Baiano.

The South American giants, appearing for the first time in Lagos after playing all their previous matches in the eastern town of Calabar, clearly outplayed their rivals, Uruguay, particularly in the first half.

But the anticipated goal haul was not to be despite a series of first-half opportunities for Baiano, Rodrigo Ferrugem, Matuzalem Francelino da Silva and Alessandro Mancini.

Against the run of play, Uruguay then struck back, when Jorge Anchen pulled out a superb looping goal from outside the area in the second half to beat the Brazilian goalkeeper and bring the Uruguayans back in to the match.

Four minutes from time, a wicked foul by Brazil's Alessandro Mancini on Uruguay's captain, Cesar Pellegrini, as he was heading for goal swung the match definitively Uruguay's way.

Nestor Cannobio marched up to the spot and coolly put the penalty away.

Nigeria meanwhile crashed out of the of the contest losing 3-1 to Mali despite the support of a massive home crowd roaring them on in the eastern town of Enugu.

Mali, who beat Cameroon 5-4 Thursday, made the best possible start to the match, scoring in the second minute through Mamadou Bagayoko.

The Nigerian Flying Eagles, who have never seemed at ease in the tournament, struck back quickly however in the 17th minute through Hashimu Garba.

But Mali went ahead again a minute before half time through Mamadou Diarra and put the game beyond doubt after 72 minutes with a second goal for Bagayoko.

In Ibadan, the last Asian representative in the competition, Japan, put out Mexico through two audacious first-half headers from Japan's Masashi Motoyama and Shinji Ono.

Japan got off to a flying start in the match with Motoyama taking just four minutes to knock in the first goal, heading in against a



Spaniard Gabri Gracia (R) vies with Ghanaian goalkeeper Adjie in a FIFA juniors world championship quarter-final at Kaduna (AFP photo)



A Nigerian soccer fan, painted in national colours flashes a sign in support of the Japanese team who played against Mexico in their Youth Soccer World Cup match in Ibadan. Japan beat Mexico 2-0 (AFP photo)

nonplussed Mexican defence lacking central defender and captain Rafael Marquez out through suspension.

Ono, the star of the Japanese side who already has played in France 98, followed up 20 minutes later with another headed goal and from then on the Asian side defended hard to keep out an increasingly desperate Mexican attack.

The Japanese, trained by

World Youth Cup quarter-final results

At Kaduna		
Spain	1	Ghana 1
At Ibadan		
Japan	2	Mexico 0
At Enugu		
Nigeria	1	Mali 3
At Lagos		
Uruguay	2	Brazil 1

Frenchman Philippe Troussier, had come into the match having won their first round group, and beat past winners Portugal to get into the quarter-finals.

But they were still not expected to get past the Mexicans, trained by Jesus del Muro, who had put out European champions Ireland 1-0 and knocked out defending world champions Argentina 4-1 Thursday.

In a tight fought match, neither side could hit the net in the first half despite a lot of attacking play by both sides.

But in the second half, Jose Barkero put the Spanish ahead in the 53rd minute through a penalty.

Young Ghanaian star Peter Ofori-Quaye, who has scored in most of Ghana's matches, kept the African side in the match in the 90th minute with a wonderful strike from outside the area.

After extra-time failed to produce another goal, Spain went through when Rahman Issah missed Ghana's eighth attempt.

England target kids in 2006 bid

LONDON (AFP) — Children are the latest weapon to be used by England in their bid to stage the 2006 World Cup. Bid organisers together with Sports Minister Tony Banks unveiled their "Welcome to the World" project at a glitzy ceremony on Monday which would see an estimated 2,500 children from around the world travel to the World Cup, should England win the right to host it.

The idea, which bid chief Alec McGivan estimated would cost £4 million (\$6 million) to be funded from tournament profits, would see 12 boys and girls from each of world body FIFA's 203 affiliated nations invited to spend two weeks in England during the World Cup with all expenses paid.

"We believe England's Welcome to the World to be the biggest sports-related cultural exchange programme ever undertaken," said McGivan of the scheme, which has the backing of Prime Minister Tony Blair.

The initiative is the latest attempt to win support by England who face stiff competition, notably from South Africa and Germany, in the race to host the 2006 finals.

It was unveiled at a lunch in Westminster with the first screening of a video, produced in 16 languages and which will be sent around the world, featuring coverage of the successful Euro 96 tournament and many of the Premiership's cosmopolitan array of stars.

The only hiccup came when Banks, who had been highlighting the lack of fencing at English stadia, was asked by a German reporter about the pitch invasion and fight between fans of Manchester United and Arsenal following the FA Cup semi-final last week.

Banks, who had apparently not seen the widely distributed television pictures, denied there had been any trouble, insisting the incident had been a "joyous fiesta".

Bid ambassador Sir Bobby Charlton took the microphone to say he would not gloss over the violence, but stressed that the numbers involved had been minuscule.

FIFA's 24-man executive committee will announce the successful bidder in March 2000.

Fighting players sent off in Brazilian 'peace match'

RIO DE JANEIRO (R) — Two players were sent off for fighting on Sunday in a Rio de Janeiro state championship clash hailed as a "peace match."

Brazil Vasco Da Gama's Ze Maria and Flamengo's Luis Alberto were sent off in the second half of their Carioca (Rio state) championship match for fighting on the field.

Flamengo won the Guanabara cup, which is awarded after the first round of the championship, with a 2-1 victory thanks to goals by Athirson and Romario in the 5th and 19th minutes respectively.

Romario paraded in front of 97,000 spectators and delirious Flamengo fans in Rio de Janeiro's packed Maracana stadium, displaying a T-shirt with the slogan: "No war. Peace in the world."

The game, pitching arch-rivals Flamengo and Vasco had been hailed as a symbolic event by both teams and sports officials as a call to end violence in Brazil's stadiums.

Earlier this month, a teenager was shot dead in a clash between Flamengo and Fluminense fans before the big Rio derby.

Vasco had only needed a draw to win the trophy but were unable to reverse Flamengo's onslaught.

Odvan raised Vasco's hopes with a goal in the 33rd minute, and the second half was dominated by Vasco's heroic but unsuccessful attempts to score once more.

In the Paulista (Sao Paulo) state championship, Palmeiras and Sao Paulo drew 4-4.

Sao Paulo's Dodo opened the scoring in the third minute, followed by Palmeiras' Evair in the 15th. Sao Paulo retaliated with Serginho in the 22nd minute, only to be outdone by Palmeiras' Galeano scoring in the 40th.

Dodo quickly came back in the 48th minute of the first half with yet another goal for Sao Paulo.

Galeano scored again in the 71st minute, Evair gave Palmeiras the lead 4-3 in the 81st and Sao Paulo's Rogério then hit back in the 82nd. The draw left Sao Paulo leading on 20 points with Palmeiras trailing just behind with 18 points.

SCOREBOARD

NBA

New Jersey	86	Philadelphia	79
Boston	101	Washington	98
Orlando	88	Detroit	81
Phoenix	99	Seattle	93
Golden State	90	Vancouver	85
Miami	92	Indiana	88
San Antonio	86	Houston	83
Chicago	79	Milwaukee	77
Utah	97	Minnesota	76
Denver	103	LA Clippers	101

French League Cup semi-final

Metz	4	Montpellier	3
Lens	2	Sochaux	0 AET

Final on May 8 at Stade de France

Spanish League

Villarreal	1	D. La Coruna	2
Athletic Bilbao	2	Tenerife	0
Real Betis	5	Real Oviedo	0
Real Zaragoza	1	Real Sociedad	1
R. Santander	0	Espanyol	2
Extremadura	1	Salamanca	1
Celta Vigo	1	Alaves	1
Real Madrid	3	Valencia	1

Portuguese League

Maritimo	2	Rio Ave	0
Uniao Leiria	3	D. Chaves	1
Salgueiros	1	Vitoria Setubal	0
FC Porto	2	Campomaiorense	0

Dutch League

FC Utrecht	1	RKC Waalwijk	1
NAC Breda	0	Feyenoord	1
Ajax	1	Fortuna Sittard	3

Portuguese League

Maritimo	2	Rio Ave	0
Uniao Leiria	3	D. Chaves	1
Salgueiros	1	Vitoria Setubal	0

Scottish Premier League

Dundee	1	Rangers	1
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German League

Hamburg SV	0	B. Dortmund	0
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Greek League

Ionikos	1	Olympiakos	3
Apollon	2	E. Astir	2
Aris	1	Xanthi	2
Veria	0	Pyrgos	0
Kavala	2	Heraklis	0
OFI Crete	2	Panionios	0
Elefsina	0	Proodevtiki	1

Italian League

Bari	0	Salernitana	0
Empoli	1	Piacenza	2
Inter Milan	1	Vicenza	1
Perugia	3	AS Roma	2
Udinese	1	AC Milan	5
Venezia	1	Cagliari	0

English Premiership

Chelsea	2	Leicester City	2
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Safety fears halts start of Catalunya Rally

LLORER DE MAR (AFP) — Safety fears forced officials to abandon Monday morning's opening special stage of the Catalunya Rally.

The race organisers took the decision with thousands of fans having flocked to the roads in north east Spain.

World champion Tommi Makinen was the only driver able to complete the 9.4 mile section before the stage had to be scrapped.

Britain's Colin McRae was due to launch his rally challenge next, but he was stopped because too many fans had encroached onto roads in which he would be hurtling along at 100mph in his Ford Focus.

The organiser wanted to scrap the stage before the start, but was unable to get his message through before Makinen got underway in his Mitsubishi.

All the drivers were given the same time as the Finn who leads McRae by just two points in the championship standings.

The roads on the next stage — inland from the rally base in the Costa Brava coastal town of Lloret de Mar — were cleared of spectators to allow the cars to belatedly get the rally underway proper.

Frenchman Didier Auriol was second fastest of the main contenders by just 1.3 seconds from Toyota teammate Carlos Sainz who is desperate for a home win to boost his title hopes.

Jesus Puras of Spain surprised everyone by being fastest in his Citroen Xsara — taking a 2.6 sec advance over Auriol.

<p>Cinema Theatre Cinema Theatre Cinema Theatre Cinema Theatre</p>						
<p>CINEMA TEL:463-4144 PHILADELPHIA '1'</p> <p>Steven Spielberg's ANTZ Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:15</p> <p>SAVING PRIVATE RYAN Show: 9:30</p>	<p>CINEMA TEL:463-4144 PHILADELPHIA '2'</p> <p>Sophie Marceau ... in Leo Tolstoy's ANNA KARENINA Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30</p>	<p>CINEMA TEL:5699238 PLAZA</p> <p>Leonardo Di Caprio ... in TITANIC Shows: 12:15, 3:30, 6:45, 9:45</p>	<p>CINEMA TEL:5677420 CONCORDE</p> <p>ALWAD MAHROUS BIA' AL WAZIR Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30</p> <p>CONCORDE 2 DISCLOSURE</p>	<p>CINEMA TEL:5934793 GALLERIA 1</p> <p>ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria Will Smith & Gene Hackman ... in ENEMY OF THE STATE Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:45</p>	<p>CINEMA TEL:5934793 GALLERIA 2</p> <p>ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria Dennis Quaid & Natasha Richardson ... in THE PARENT TRAP Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30</p>	<p>Hisham Yanes Theatre TEL: 4625155</p> <p>The political satire AL SALAM AL Starting at 8:30 p.m.</p>

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Goma bound for Newcastle

NEWCASTLE (AFP) — FA Cup finalists Newcastle United have targeted Paris St Germain defender Alain Goma as a possible signing for next season. The 26-year-old centre-back is expected to arrive in the north-east in the summer in a £3.5 million (\$5.2 million) move as manager Ruud Gullit attempts to solve his growing defensive headache. Neither Gullit nor the club have confirmed the move, but the manager and chairman Freddy Shepherd flew to France after last weekend's FA Cup semi-final victory over Tottenham Hotspur to meet a potential target.

Worms poised to join Dortmund

COLOGNE (AFP) — German international Christian Worms is poised to join Bundesliga club Borussia Dortmund in a 12.6 million marks (\$7 million) transfer from French outfit Paris Saint Germain, it was reported here on Monday. The 26-year-old defender, who joined PSG last season from German side Bayer Leverkusen and was under contract until 2001, has made no secret of his wish to leave the club, which has endured a miserable season. Dortmund club officials have not yet confirmed the deal. Worm's fee is believed to be 4.8 million Mark (\$3 million). He was also reported to have been approached by English Premiership side Liverpool. Spanish giants Real Madrid and Bundesliga leaders Bayern Munich, Dortmund drew 0-0 at Hamburg on Sunday evening and are sixth on the table, well positioned to qualify for next season's UEFA Cup.

Berger returns to Frankfurt

COLOGNE (AFP) — Jorg Berger has returned to coach struggling Bundesliga club Eintracht Frankfurt just hours after his predecessor Reinhold Fanz was sacked, it was announced here on Monday. Frankfurt removed Fanz after eight losses in nine games, including Friday's 3-1 defeat to Bundesliga leaders Bayern Munich. Berger has developed a reputation for saving clubs in difficulty late in the season, although his last mission — at Karlsruhe a year ago — failed and the south German team was relegated. This will be the 54-year-old's second stint at Frankfurt. He coached the side from December 1988 to April 1991, at a time when they enjoyed far more success. Berger has also previously coached FC Cologne, Schalke and Swiss club FC Basel.

Giggs rated 50-50 for Juventus clash

MANCHESTER (AFP) — Ryan Giggs remains Manchester United's main doubt for the European Cup semi-final clash with Juventus in Turin but manager Alex Ferguson insisted on Monday the Welshman had a 50-50 chance of playing. Ferguson hopes Giggs will be ready to train again before United fly out to Italy on Tuesday and remains optimistic he will make the second leg, where United start level after the 1-1 draw at Old Trafford a fortnight ago. The United boss has been boosted by the news that Danish goalkeeper Peter Schmeichel is back in training after missing Saturday's home win over Sheffield Wednesday and he will step back into the side on Wednesday. Giggs has been out of action since being injured in last week's FA Cup semi-final win over Arsenal and has had his ankle immobilised over the past few days to protect it.

Fowler's nose lands him in trouble

LONDON (AFP) — England coach Kevin Keegan was on Monday awaiting news on whether Robbie Fowler will be fit for the friendly against Hungary next week after the Liverpool striker suffered a suspected broken nose in a fight at the weekend. Fowler, who has been banned for Liverpool's last six games of the season because of disciplinary problems, was injured in the early hours of Sunday at a Liverpool hotel. A 41-year-old man has been charged with assault. If fit, Fowler could expect to play a key role in Budapest with club-mate Michael Owen and Blackburn's Chris Sutton both injured. The alleged assault is the latest episode in a traumatic month for Fowler. He was banned for six games and fined £32,000 (\$48,000) by the FA and a similar sum by Liverpool after he mimicked sniffing cocaine on a football pitch while line in the Merseyside derby with Everton two weeks' ago.

Sri Lanka begins Jayasinghe defence

COLOMBO (AFP) — Sri Lanka is to defend the island's controversial sprinter Susanthika Jayasinghe at an international arbitration hearing following allegations of doping, a press report said Monday. The Amateur Athletic Association is sending its president Ari Kannangara and a lawyer who was a member of a panel that cleared Jayasinghe last year of taking banned steroids, the Daily News said. The International Amateur Athletic Federation was unhappy over the Sri Lankan panel's decision in August to clear Jayasinghe by a 2-to-1 vote. It ordered a fresh hearing before an arbitration panel. The Daily News said the hearing could be later this week in Monaco. Jayasinghe, 24, joined the world's athletic elite by winning Sri Lanka's first world track medal in 1997. She became an instant heroine at home but was soon embroiled in a sex scandal. She accused a top politician of trying to sexually harass her and ruin her career. Jayasinghe has claimed she is the victim of Sri Lankan sports officials trying to control her. Earlier this year she left for the U.S. after withdrawing suddenly from the Bangkok Asian games, saying she had injured herself during a qualifying race.

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U.S., Russia, Italy and Slovakia book Fed Cup semi-final seats

PARIS (AFP) — Russia edged out France in the Fed Cup World Group I first round match on Sunday to book a semi-final berth alongside the United States, Slovakia and Italy.

Russia, 3-2 conquerors of France after clinching the final doubles in Moscow, now meet Slovakia, 5-0 winners over Switzerland in Zurich.

The United States took both singles and their doubles on Sunday to sweep to a 5-0 win over Croatia and book a date with Italy, assured of their passage into the last four with a 3-1 lead over Spain.

With Amelie Mauresmo dragging France to 2-2 with a 6-2, 5-7, 6-1 verdict over Tatiana Panova, the stakes were high for the final doubles.

But the Russian duo of Elena Likhovtseva and Elena Makarova meant it was vodka all round for the home crowd by seeing off the out-of-form Nathalie Taziat and Mauresmo 6-0, 7-6 (7/5).

In Raleigh, North Carolina, the United States were in peerless form.

Monica Seles barely drew breath in beating Iva Majoli 6-0, 6-3, while Chanda Rubin overcame Silvija Talaja 6-3, 6-4. Croatia were whitewashed when Seles and Rubin beat Majoli and Talaja 6-3, 6-2 in the doubles.

Italy, with home advantage in Reggio Calabria, made no mistake taking both Sunday's singles against Spain to win 3-1 with the doubles not played.

Rita Grande made up for her Saturday loss to Magui Serna by meting out a 6-4, 6-1 defeat to Virginia Ruano while Silvia Farina maintained her good Fed Cup form with a tight 3-6, 7-6 (7/4), 6-4 win over Serna.

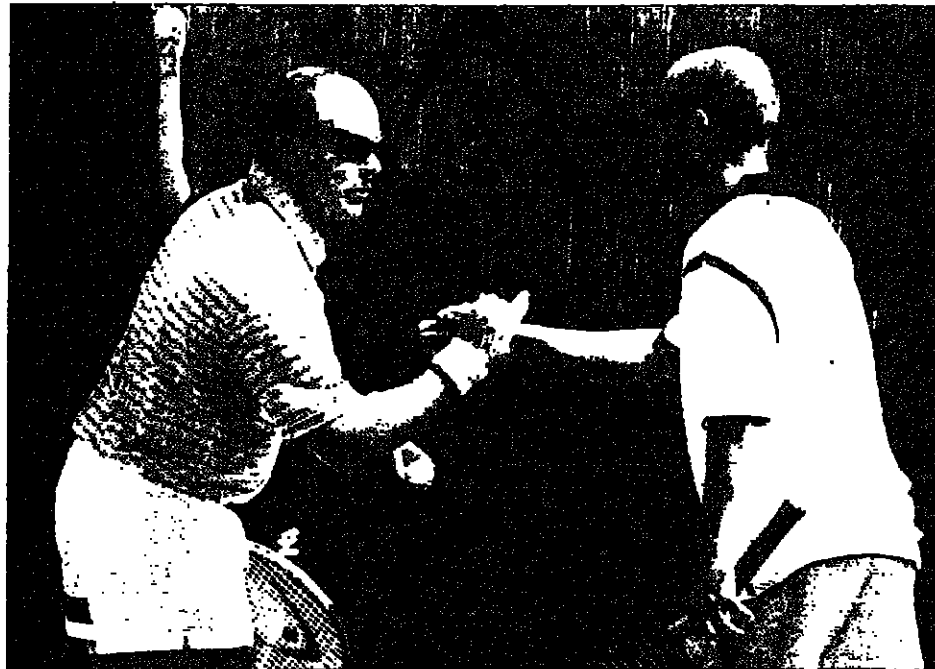
Becker eliminates Pioline in Monte Carlo Open

MONTE CARLO (AFP) — Germany's Boris Becker continued his career-long domination of France's Cedric Pioline here on Monday to reach the second round of the \$2.45 million Monte Carlo Open.

Becker dominated the 17th seeded Frenchman to win 6-4, 5-7, 6-4 in just under three hours on Centre Court at the Monte Carlo Country Club. The 31-year-old German got off to a good start in his first clay surface match since last July, trading early breaks with Pioline in the opening set but then turning on his power to surge to a 5-4 lead.

Becker snapped up the opener after 47 minutes and looked like he would run away with the second set. However, Pioline won the next set, only his second set in five matches against the German, a three-time finalist here.

The match momentum switched constantly back and forth as last year's French finalist tried to overcome Becker, who has already announced that he will retire from tennis in July and received an invitation to the tournament. The 29-year-old



Prince Albert of Monaco (L) shakes hand with Andre Agassi as he plays a friendly match during the Monte Carlo Open in Monaco Monday (Reuters photo)

Frenchman, who led 3-0 in the final set lost the momentum with nine double faults and went on to lose the penultimate game after saving four break points.

Becker produced his sixth ace of the afternoon to yield a match point, which Pioline returned long. The win was Becker's sixth

against Pioline on clay. Becker who lost the final of the Hong Kong Open last week to Andre Agassi will take on France's Jerome Golmard in the second round.

In other first round matches number 14 seed Tommy Haas of Germany advanced over Russian teenager Marat Safin 6-4,

6-2. America's Vince Spadea beat another young hopeful, when he dismissed world junior champion Roger Federer of Switzerland 7-6, (7-3), 6-0. France's Jerome Golmard beat Italian Davide Sanguinetti 6-1, 6-2, while Argentina's Mariano Puerta overcame Arnaud Clement of France 6-4, 6-2.

Spurs rally past Rockets, Heat nip Pacers

SAN ANTONIO (R) — Mario Elie's 3-pointer with one-tenth of a second left gave the San Antonio Spurs their third straight victory as they rallied from a 23-point deficit on Sunday to defeat the Houston Rockets 86-83.

Avery Johnson drove into the lane and passed to David Robinson at the top of the key to an open Elie on the right side, who buried the shot to beat his former team.

Elie scored the final eight points for San Antonio. He finished with 21, two shy of his season high, and drained all four of his 3-pointers. Sean Elliott netted 16 points while David Robinson had 14 and 14 rebounds.

The Spurs hold a two-game lead over the Rockets for second place in the Midwest Division.

Charles Barkley had 23 points, 15 rebounds and eight assists for Houston, which had its three-game winning streak snapped and fell to 0-3 against San Antonio this season.

Hakeem Olajuwon added 18 points and 11 rebounds.

In Miami, the Heat squandered nearly all of an eight-point lead in the last 2 1/2 minutes but held on for a crucial 92-88 victory over the Indiana Pacers when Reggie Miller missed a rushed 3-point shot in the final seconds.

Alonzo Mourning totalled 24 points and 16 rebounds and reserve Clarence

Weatherspoon spearheaded a decisive fourth-quarter run for the heat, who vaulted a game ahead of the pacers into second place in the Eastern Conference.

In Orlando, Penny Hardaway scored 19 of his 27 points in the final period, as the Magic rallied for an 88-81 victory over the Detroit Pistons to sweep their four-game season series.

The top team in the Eastern Conference, Orlando was coming off losses to Indiana and Atlanta, its first losing streak this season. The Magic trailed by 14 points in the second quarter and 68-60 entering the final 12 minutes before roaring back behind Hardaway, who shot 6-of-6 from the field in the period.

In Chicago, Mark Bryant drained a jumper with 2.3 seconds remaining as the Bulls snapped a seven-game losing streak and beat the Milwaukee Bucks 79-77.

Milwaukee lost for the fourth time in six games and missed a chance to move into fifth place in the Eastern Conference.

In New Jersey, Allen Iverson hit just 2-of-17 shots from the field and his Philadelphia 76ers fell to the Nets 86-79.

The 76ers (21-19) dropped into a tie with Cleveland for seventh place in the Eastern Conference, one-half game ahead of New York. The top eight teams make the play-

offs, where the Sixers have not been since 1991.

In Phoenix, Clifford Robinson scored nine of his 23 points in the fourth quarter to help the Suns solidify their hold on seventh place in the Western Conference with a 99-93 victory over the Seattle SuperSonics.

Phoenix beat Seattle for the second time in five days and swept the three-game series from its Pacific Division rival.

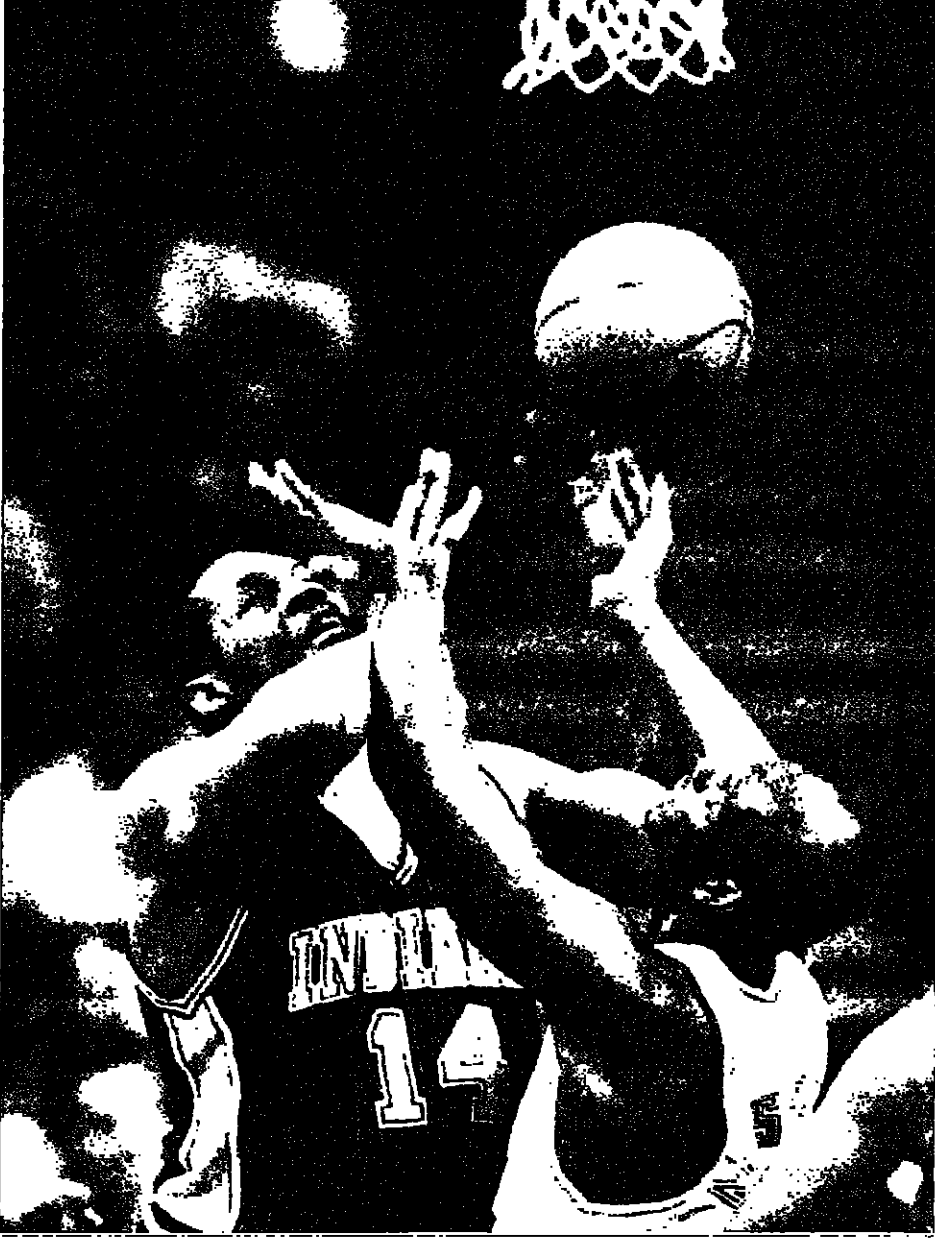
The Suns trail sixth-place Minnesota by one-half game. The Sonics are clinging to eighth place in the West, one game ahead of Sacramento and Golden State.

In Vancouver, Donyell Marshall came off the bench to score 24 points as the Golden State Warriors inched closer to the final playoff berth in the Western Conference with a 90-85 victory over the Grizzlies.

In Minneapolis, the Utah Jazz won their league season-high 11th straight game with a 97-76 rout of the Timberwolves as Bryon Russell scored 14 points to lead seven players in double figures.

In Los Angeles, Nick Van Exel scored 34 points including a 22-foot jumper with 5.5 seconds left that gave the Denver Nuggets just their second road win of the season, 103-101 over the Clippers.

In Washington, rookie Paul Pierce tied a season high



Miami Heat forward Jamal Mashburn (R) and Indiana Pacers forward Sam Perkins (L) jump for a rebound during first period action of their game 18 April 1999 at the Miami Arena in Miami, Florida. The Heat won 92-88 (AFP photo)

with 26 points and the Boston Celtics built a 14-

point lead with eight minutes left before holding on for a Wizards.

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Turkish vote pushes Ecevit ahead of surging far-right

ANKARA (R) — Turkish nationalists stormed to dramatic electoral successes on Monday, dashing Islamist hopes of power and challenging Premier Bülent Ecevit to embrace them in government.

Istanbul's stock market was down more than three per cent on concern the political wrangling of the last four years could continue. But a nationalist pledge of commitment to International Monetary Fund reforms lifted shares, which recovered to end almost unchanged.

Bond yields rose two to three percentage points to 102-103 per cent.

"There's a reactionary nationalism in Turkey," political science professor Celin Yetkin told Reuters.

"Domestically, the Kurdish question has made people remember they are Turks. Externally there is the isolation from the Western world."

Computer projections suggest the Nationalist Action Party (MHP), which failed at 1995 polls to clear the 10 per cent hurdle, would garner about 130 seats, close behind Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit's Democratic Left Party (DSP).

The Islamist Virtue Party, the biggest grouping in the last

parliament, suffered a bitter defeat. Protest votes registered in their name against mainstream parties in 1995 were clearly lost on Sunday to the radical MHP.

"Virtue's decline will pull Turkey away from the appearance of a country where radical Islam is on the rise," said Ertugrul Ozkok, editor of Hürriyet newspaper.

It will also ease fears in the powerful army, which saw Virtue as a threat to Turkey's secularist constitution.

Celebrations went on well into the morning at MHP headquarters, young supporters waving the party's red three-crescent flag and making their distinctive "wolf's head" gesture. The thumb meets the tips of the two middle fingers to form the snout, while the outer fingers rise to show the ears.

MHP leader Devlet Bahçeli, a 51-year-old economist, was asked by Sabah newspaper if he would entertain a coalition with the DSP and Mesut Yilmaz's conservative Motherland Party.

"Why not? If they accept our terms. We will not insist on our own programme being implemented. We will strive to find a middle road but we will not

make too many concessions," he said.

Ecevit, who has always combined leftist credentials with a strong nationalist streak, saw his popularity rise with the capture of Kurdish guerrilla leader Abdullah "Apo" Ocalan shortly after he took office in January. Ocalan faces trial over the deaths of 29,000 people in a 14-year-old campaign.

The MHP benefited from the same nationalist sentiment, whose immediate origins might be traced back to a European Union (EU) decision over a year ago to omit Turkey from a list of countries invited to seek EU membership.

Since then, Turkey's foreign policy has grown more robust. Threats of military action led Syria to expel Ocalan on the first stage of his sojourn into captivity and caused Cyprus to drop plans to deploy Russian anti-aircraft missiles. Relations with Brussels are, at best, frosty.

DSP and MHP have a history of conflict in the 1970s when supporters of left and right fought bloody street battles that led eventually to a 1980 military coup. But Ecevit himself said on Sunday night

times had changed since those days.

Both parties also share a hardline policy to Ocalan's armed Kurdish rebels. They argue the insurgency stems from foreign interference and poverty rather than any intrinsic problem between the Turkish state and its Kurdish minority.

Despite its claims of vote rigging, a party calling for negotiations with Ocalan's guerrillas won many seats in local elections in the mainly Kurdish southeast, setting the stage for possible clashes between local government and Ankara.

Ecevit met President Süleyman Demirel and agreed to stay on as caretaker prime minister until the head of state decides on a first candidate to try to form a government.

If Ecevit gets that task he may decide that it would be impossible to rule without the resurgent MHP.

Markets could find some solace in such an arrangement. The MHP's economic policy is not clear in any detail, but the party might be persuaded to take a back seat on finance in return for a say in matters of foreign policy and domestic security.



NO MORE: Sehide Lushtaku, from Mitrovica, Kosovo, stares at the Morini border crossing between Yugoslavia and Albania on Monday hoping to see her relatives cross. Sehide, 83, left Mitrovica last Thursday, arrived at Morini Saturday, and once she reached the Albanian border she refused to go on (AP photo)



Yeltsin asked to replace dead fish

OSLO (R) — Norway's main aquarium said on Monday it would ask Russian President Boris Yeltsin for a new sturgeon to replace "Nikita," a fish donated by the Kremlin in the 1960s which has died from an overdose of salt water. The aquarium in the western port of Bergen had been the home of Nikita since former Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev gave four fish to Norway in 1964. One of them, outliving the others, was dubbed "Nikita" in honour of the late Kremlin chief. "We understand it's not top priority, but if Russia would be so kind as to give us a new sturgeon, we would be incredibly grateful," Stig Saegrov, director of Bergen Aquarium, told Reuters. "We would call it Boris."

Bergman calls for cheaper books

STOCKHOLM (R) — Film director Ingmar Bergman has called on Sweden to cut taxes on books. "With 25 per cent value added tax, Sweden has among the highest taxes on books in the world. We must save reading," said a column signed by Swedish intellectuals including Bergman that was published in the newspaper Dagens Nyheter. "Books are becoming goods which compete with glass vases — they have become so dear and extravagant they are mostly bought as gifts," the column said. It said only Denmark had taxes as high as Sweden's and noted that the Baltic states had recently cut value added taxes on children's books and textbooks.

China stuffs beloved panda

BEIJING (AFP) — A giant panda which died in February from renal failure will still be on view to the public — as a stuffed exhibit in a museum, official media said Monday. Zhai Zhai died at the age of 28 after intensive efforts to save him with oxygen, blood transfusions and injections. The panda, which also suffered from epilepsy and had a cataract, had been the star of the Tianjin Zoo, 100 kilometres southeast of Beijing. But now the Tianjin Natural History Museum has announced plans to put Zhai Zhai's stuffed remains on show. Xinhua news agency reported. "Designers note that visitors will be deeply impressed with the feature exhibit," the agency said.

Lions rule after driving off hyenas

ADDISABABA (R) — A pride of lions has emerged victorious from a ferocious two-week battle with a pack of hyenas in the Ethiopian desert. The two groups of animals had been locked in almost daily combat as they struggled for supremacy but the lions finally prevailed, the state news agency reported on Monday. Mengistu Endalatu, a resident of the nearest village to the scene of the fighting, said that 45 years ago a group of desert hyenas was decimated by a single lion believed to have escaped from Emperor Haile Selassie's palace in the historic town of Harar. "Once again, this time the hyenas lost the battle and ran away in disarray," Mengistu said.

Man driving across U.S. on lawnmower

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Brad Hauser is following his dream of driving across America — alone. At 16 kph on a Yard-Man tractor lawnmower. On Sunday, Hauser slipped his helmet over his head, adjusted his orange vest and started the mower's engine. Then he waved goodbye and took to the highway. He is attempting to raise \$100,000 for charity and get in the Guinness Book of Records with a lawn tractor journey across more than 7,200 kilometres. The current record is 5,600 kilometres. Hauser began his trip April 7 in Atlanta and hopes to finish by June 10 in Santa Monica, California. His next major stop will be Tuesday in New York, where he will mow a bit of grass in Central Park.

NEWS IN BRIEF

'Iraqi officials hold talks in Saudi'

BAGHDAD (R) — Senior Iraqi officials have held talks in Saudi Arabia for the first time since the 1991 Gulf War over Kuwait, Iraqi newspapers reported on Monday. They said Iraq's Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Abdul Jabbar Tawfiq Muhammad met in Riyadh with his Saudi counterpart Khaled Ben Mohammad Al Ankary. Iraq's Foreign Ministry Undersecretary and former Ambassador to the Arab League Nabil Najim attended the meeting. The newspapers gave no further details but said they discussed a meeting of Arab ministers of higher education being held in Riyadh.

U.S. fighter planes hit Iraqi targets

ANKARA (AP) — U.S. fighter planes attacked defence sites in northern Iraq on Monday after being targeted by Iraqi radar. U.S. officials said. It was the second confrontation in the northern no-fly zone in about a month. U.S. air force F-15Es dropped laser guided bombs on radar sites in the vicinity of Mosul while patrolling the Iraqi skies, said a statement from Incirlik air base in southern Turkey where U.S. jets are based. It said damage to Iraqi forces was under assessment. All coalition aircraft departed the area safely. A statement by the Iraqi armed forces said the bombing was directed against "service installations and heroic weapons sites." The statement carried by the official Iraqi News Agency made no mention of damage or casualties.

Russia slams Turkey's Iraq incursions

MOSCOW (R) — Russia on Monday said the West's failure to condemn Turkish killings of Kurdish separatist guerrillas in northern Iraq highlighted its double standards in international policy. "The situation arising in this region has more than one similarity with the situation in Kosovo," the foreign ministry said in a statement, condemning Turkey's military action in northern Iraq. "The real absence of any kind of reaction from the West [to the killings] shows the double standards in its policy. In one instance, difficulties in regulating domestic problems provokes the use of NATO's military machine and in another... they close their eyes." "It is a gross infringement of basic norms of international rights, trampling the sovereignty and territory of a neighbouring country," Russia's foreign ministry said. Turkey regularly mounts operations into northern Iraq against guerrillas from the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK), who use the remote mountainous terrain to launch attacks on mainly Kurdish southeast Turkey in their campaign for self-rule.

Truce panel meets over Amoun

NAQOURA (AFP) — The international panel monitoring the truce in south Lebanon met here Monday to discuss Lebanese complaints over Israel's occupation of the village of Amoun and the wounding of two civilians, officials said. The ceasefire monitoring committee convened at 9:30 a.m. (0630 GMT) at the U.N. headquarters in Naqoura, near the Israeli border, they said. The Lebanese government has accused Israel of violating the terms of an April 1996 ceasefire agreement on sparing civilians by occupying the mostly deserted village of Amoun on Thursday. Lebanon filed a second complaint after a Lebanese cameraman working for Abu Dhabi television was slightly wounded by a rubber bullet fired by Israeli troops at a group of journalists at Amoun's entrance on Friday. The third Lebanese protest was lodged after a Lebanese civilian was wounded Sunday during an Israeli mortar bombardment of the village of Arab Salim located just outside the Israeli-occupied zone in south Lebanon.

Lebanon files U.N. appeal over Amoun

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Lebanon has urged the Security Council to force Israel to evacuate a village that it included last week in its so-called "security zone" in south Lebanon. In a letter to Secretary General Kofi Annan circulated on Monday, Lebanese U.N. representative Samir Moubarak said Israel sent 50 men, preceded by a tank, an armoured personnel carrier and a jeep, into the village of Amoun on April 15. "In a new attempt to include it into the occupied zone in the south, they separated Amoun from the liberated area and proceeded to arrest residents and to prevent inhabitants from entering," he said. "In bringing this dangerous development to the attention of the secretary general, the members of the Security Council and the international community, the Lebanese government urges swift action to put an end to a situation that constitutes a flagrant violation of the charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law," Moubarak added. "The Lebanese government holds Israel responsible for all material and other damage that may be done to civilians by this action," he said. He also urged implementation of a 1978 Security Council resolution that called on Israel to withdraw from southern Lebanon after an incursion against Palestinian guerrillas.

Israel approves construction of mosque in Nazareth

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Israel, brushing aside protests from the Vatican, has authorised the construction of a mosque next to the Basilica of the Annunciation in Nazareth, one of the holiest shrines in Christendom, officials said Monday.

"The Israeli government has authorised the construction of a small mosque on a 504-square-metre plot of land" next to the basilica, said Moti Zaken, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's advisor on Arab Israeli affairs.

The government decision overruled Nazareth Mayor Ramez Jeriaisi, a Christian, who has refused to let the mosque be built and rejected claims by local Muslim leaders that the disputed land belonged in the past to an Islamic trust.

Jeriaisi's municipality planned to create a pedestrian plaza at the site to improve access to the Basilica of the Annunciation for hundreds of thousands of Christian pilgrims expected to visit Nazareth for the Millennium.

The dispute worsened after an Islamist party gained control of the Nazareth city council in November elections. Anti-Christian violence flared

over the issue early this month in the city, the biggest Arab Israeli town in Israel with 60,000 residents.

Zaken told AFP that the government had "made a compromise proposal aimed at ending tensions between Christians and Muslims in Nazareth."

Under the compromise, the Muslims can use 250-square metres of the land initially set aside for the basilica plaza plus another 250-square metres from adjacent plots to build the mosque, he said.

The Islamists had been demanding control over 1,000-square metres of land next to the basilica to build their mosque and have been occupying a large protest tent at the site for several months to press their claim.

Last week the Vatican representative in the Holy Land, Archbishop Pietro Sambi, warned Israel not to permit construction of the mosque next to the basilica and warned that Christian leaders could close all the churches in Israel in protest if the government gave in on the issue.

According to Christian scriptures, the basilica is built on the site where the Angel Gabriel told Mary she was pregnant with Jesus.

Israel probes another key Netanyahu ally

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Israel's state prosecutor launched an investigation on Monday into allegations a Russian immigrant politician allied to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu insulted a senior police official by calling him an "anti-Semitic racist."

The decision followed a request by police chiefs who were infuriated with a verbal assault levelled against them this weekend by Avigdor Lieberman, Netanyahu's former chief of staff who is heading a Russian immigrant slate for parliament in May elections.

"The state prosecutor and acting attorney general, Edna Arbel, decided that there is room to open an investigation against Lieberman on grounds of threatening and insulting a public officer," a ministry of justice statement said.

"The investigation was launched following Lieberman's comments in which he referred to a senior policeman as an anti-Semitic racist," the statement added.

The national police commissioner Yehuda Wilk defended his staff and spoke out against Lieberman.

"We recommended to the states attorney that Lieberman be prosecuted for the statements he made about public figures who carry out their work in the best possible way," Wilk said.

The scandal erupted just days after another key Netanyahu ally, Ariel Deri of the ultra-Orthodox party Shas, was sentenced to four years in jail for bribe-taking and fraud.

Netanyahu is counting on the backing of both Deri and Lieberman in his campaign for reelection in the May polls.

The Yediot Aharanot newspaper quoted Lieberman as calling two chief police criminal investigators "racist anti-Semites" for investigating Russian immigrant businessmen.

Lieberman was forced to resign as Netanyahu's chief of staff in 1997 after another scandal involving the aborted appointment of a Netanyahu crony as attorney general in a

deal police charged was aimed at getting the criminal charges against Deri dropped.

He has since been investigated by police for alleged links to suspected Russian crime bosses, as have a number of associates of his newly created political party, Israel Our Home.

Lieberman set up the party as a right-wing alternative to the centrist Russian immigrant party, Israel B'Aliya, which is headed by Nathan Sharansky and is a member of Netanyahu's current coalition government.

Algeria to confirm vote outcome despite opposition

ALGIERS (R) — Algeria's election watchdog will on Tuesday confirm army-backed Abdelaziz Bouteflika as winner of last week's one-man presidential poll despite opposition, state-run radio said on Monday.

"The council will confirm the poll results on Tuesday," the radio said in a brief statement.

Politicians said the constitutional council's move to rubber-stamp the results seven days ahead of the deadline set by law showed the authorities

and the new president were eager to act quickly to dampen opposition to Bouteflika.

Bouteflika won pledges of support from two small opposition parties who boycotted the election, which was marked by a low turnout and the last-minute withdrawal of six candidates.

The walkout left the veteran 62-year-old former minister the only candidate to lead the country out of a cycle of violence in which more than 70,000 people have been killed in seven years.

He won almost 74 per cent of the 10.5 million who voted out of the 17.5 million electorate, according to government figures.

The anti-Islamist Rally for Culture and Democracy (RCD), which boycotted the election, said it was now ready to forge alliance with Bouteflika.

Bouteflika also won support from the Republican National Rally (ANR) led by anti-Islamist Redha Malek, a former prime minister, and the Coordination of Democratic and

Republican Citizens, grouping a cluster of civic associations and intellectuals.

Besides being the army candidate, Bouteflika was also backed by four pro-government parties — the ruling National Democratic Rally (RND), the National Liberation Front (FLN), the Movement for a Peaceful Society (MPS) and the Islam-based Nahda Party.

The four control 85 per cent of the 380-seat parliament.